CALIBER PRESS

# NEGATIVE BURN

an anthology

ISSUE ONE $2.95 USA/ $3.50 Can MATURE AUDIENCES

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VOLUME ONE
NUMBER ONE

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Charles Moore and Joe Pruett /Editors

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written by Joe Pruett
illustrated by Guy Burwell and Tim Bradstreet
The prelude chapter of the all-new series beginning this Fall.

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written and illustrated by Bob Burden
An original short featuring the surreal hero of blue-collar America.

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written and illustrated by Brian Bolland
The first two installments (of 45) of this eccentric strip.

**BONESHAKER** ..... Page 13
written and illustrated by Phillip Hester
Part one of the world's strongest man.

## COVER ART OF *KILROY IS HERE*

by Andrew Robinson

Andrew is currently illustrating "THE CHAIRMAN" for DARK HORSE PRESENTS and inking the series KILROY IS HERE from Caliber Press.

A KRÜNCHY FROGG PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MAD HATTER STUDIOS INTERNATIONAL

Associate Editor: James Pruett
Staff Letterer: Roxanne Starr
Layout & Design: Shinn Uehara
Publisher: Gary Reed

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"TIANANMEN SQUARE, JUNE 4, 1989."

"THE DAY *DEMOCRACY* DIED."

"THE HOPES OF A PEACEFUL TRANSITION OF DEMOCRATIC CHANGE LOST AMIDST THE CASUALTIES OF THE IDEALISTIC."

"BUSES WERE OVERTURNED IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO STOP THE PROGRESS OF THE INCOMING APC'S AND TANKS."

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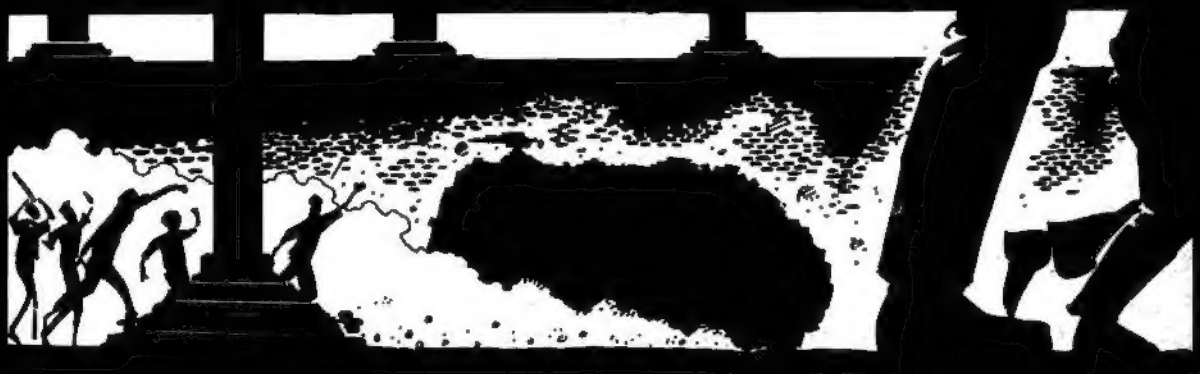

"BY THIS TIME THE ONCE PEACEFUL CROWD WAS IN A FRENZY...

... EMOTIONS HIGH... COMPASSION LOW."

"SOME OF THE STUDENTS HAD RAISED *OBJECTIONS* TO *ALLOWING* THE DRIVERS TO ESCAPE THEIR *FLAMING VEHICLES.*"

"OTHERS ARGUED THAT THE SOLDIERS *WEREN'T HUMAN BEINGS ANYWAY* SO THEY LET THEM *BURN.*"

"MY FRIENDS FROM COLLEGE WERE JEALOUS OF MY INTERNSHIP WITH *CNN.* I WISH I WAS *BACK* WITH THEM GETTING *DRUNK* RIGHT NOW."

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YOU!
COME HELP ME!
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?
I ATTENDED HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL...HOLD HIS HEAD UP!
THIS BOY NEEDS TO GET TO A HOSPITAL OR HE WON'T SURVIVE.
UMMMPH!
(YOU ARE ASSISTING A COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY REBELLION--PUNISHABLE BY DEATH.)

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KRAK
NO! HE'S ONLY HELPING THE WOUNDED!
NO! DON'T!... I'M AN AMERICAN CITIZEN! I'M JUST AN OBSERVER!
YOU PATHETIC LITTLE MAN.
HAVE YOU NO RESPECT FOR THE LIFE OF A HEALER?

KA-KA
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I HAVE NO RESPECT FOR YOUR LIFE EITHER.
WHO ARE YOU, AMERICAN? WHY ARE YOU HERE?
UH...DAN BOLIN...I'M WITH CNN. I WAS HELPING THE DOCTOR...
HE'S DEAD. ANOTHER SOUL WRONGFULLY LOST.
I HEAR THE CRIES OF THE INNOCENT. I MUST GO.
BE ASSURED OF ONE THING, DAN BOLIN...WE WILL MEET AGAIN.
WHO ARE YOU?
MEN WHO KNOW OF ME CALL ME KILROY.

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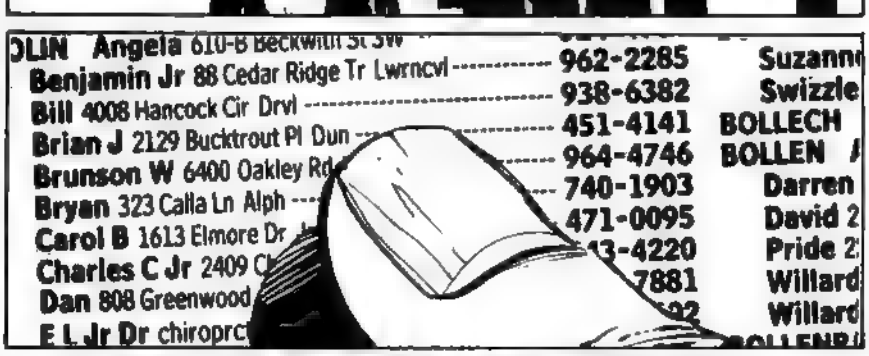
"IT'S BEEN FOUR YEARS AND THAT DAY IS FOREVER EMBEDDED IN MY MIND."

"HE SAID WE'D MEET AGAIN."

"GOD, HELP ME WHEN THAT DAY COMES."




SHORTLY DAN BOLIN. JUST AS I PROMISED.

...TO BE CONTINUED IN *KILROY IS HERE #1.*

"IT'S BEEN FOUR YEARS AND THAT DAY IS FOREVER EMBEDDED IN MY MIND."

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OLIN Angela 610-B Beckwith St SW
Benjamin Jr 88 Cedar Ridge Tr Lwrncvl ---------- 962-2285 Suzanne
Bill 4008 Hancock Cir Dryl ---------- 938-6382 Swizzle
Brian J 2129 Bucktrout Pl Dun ---------- 451-4141 BOLLECH
Brunson W 6400 Oakley Rd ---------- 964-4746 BOLLEN
Bryan 323 Calla Ln Alph ---------- 740-1903 Darren
Carol B 1613 Elmore Dr ---------- 471-0095 David 2
Charles C Jr 2409 C ---------- 3-4220 Pride 2
Dan 808 Greenwood ---------- 7881 Willard
E L Jr Dr chiroprc ---------- 92 Willard

SHORTLY DAN BOLIN. JUST AS I PROMISED.

...TO BE CONTINUED IN *KILROY IS HERE #1.*

FLAMING CARROT
THE "3" FLAPPING HEAD
OH, FLAMING CARROT! I TOLD YOU NOT TO OPEN THE GHOST BOTTLE! IT'S GROSS! IT'S GHOULISH! IT'S... IT'S GOOFY!!!
ART & STORY:
BOB BURDEN
LETTERING:
JOE PRUETT & ROXANNE STARR

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BAAA ROOO GAH GOOO
HEY, YOU!
IT'S GETTING AWAY!
GONE! ESCAPED!
HE'S A GHOST, FLAMING CARROT. HE MAY NOT EVEN UNDERSTAND ENGLISH.
STOP! IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!

BAAA ROOO GAH GOOO
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STOP! IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!

BUT LATER.
YEAH, WELL...
HEY!
SNIFFF
YAH!
AHHH
HOLY SHOOT, MY COKE! A FLAPPING HEAD JUST SNIFFED ALL MY COKE OUTA MY POCKET!
THEN.
SNURFFF
ALL OVER TOWN THE FLAPPING HEAD SNIFFS OUT ALLTHE COKE.
FLAMING CARROT! WHERE DID YOU GET THIS GHOST BOTTLE?
IN A PAWN SHOP. HMMM...I HAVE AN IDEA!

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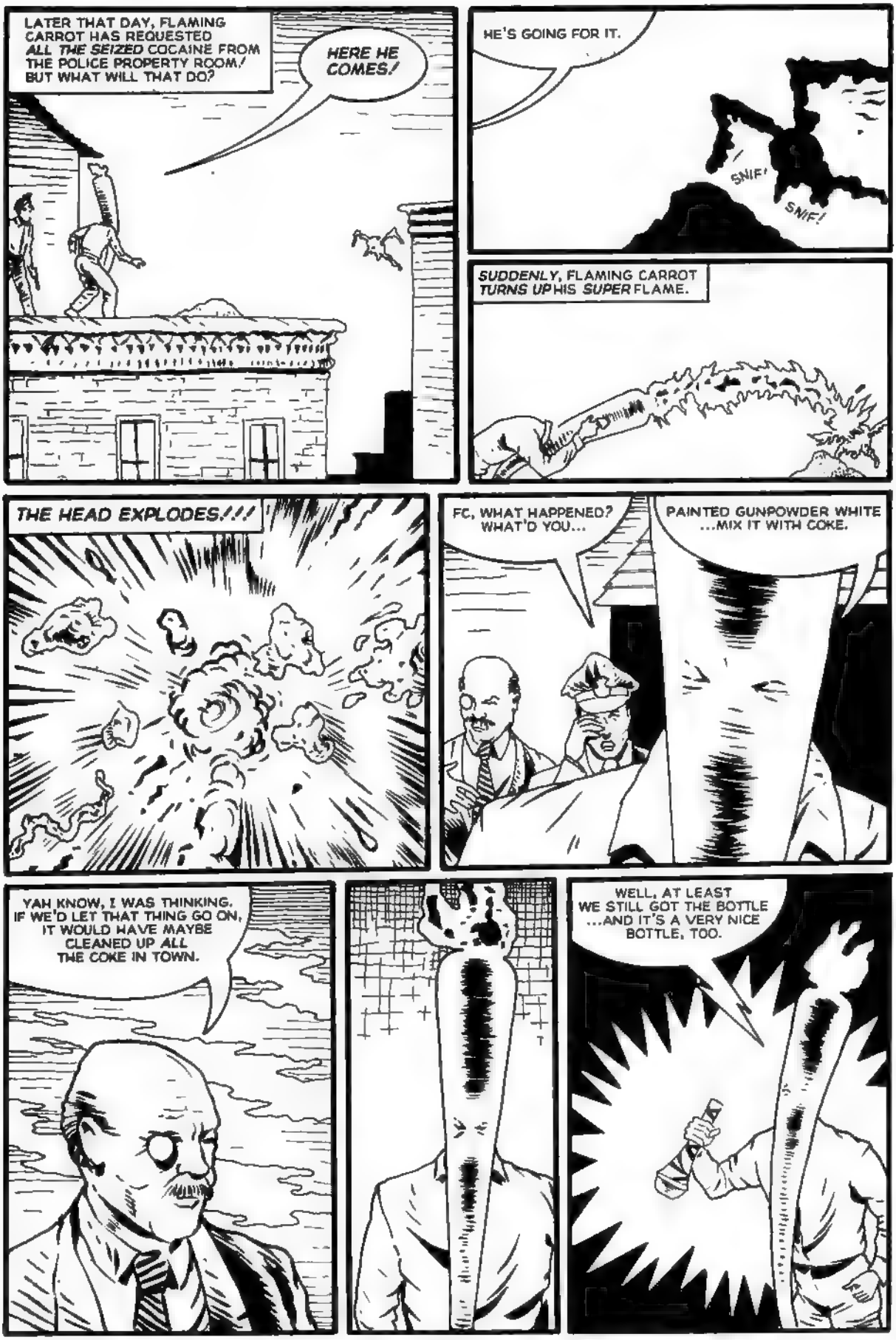
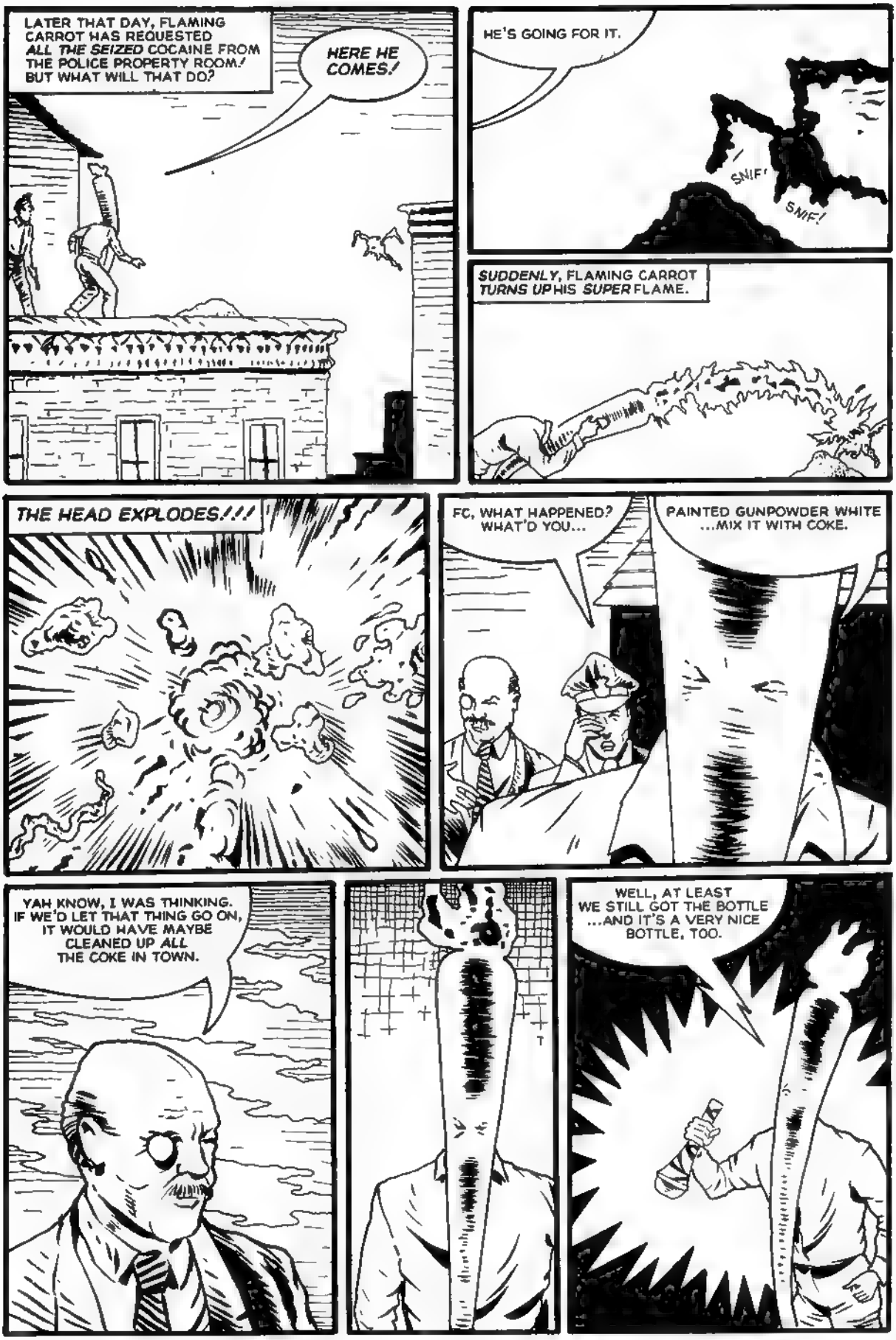

LATER THAT DAY, FLAMING CARROT HAS REQUESTED *ALL THE SEIZED* COCAINE FROM THE POLICE PROPERTY ROOM./ BUT WHAT WILL THAT DO?
*HERE HE COMES!*
HE'S GOING FOR IT.
SNIF!
SNIF!
*SUDDENLY*, FLAMING CARROT *TURNS UP* HIS *SUPER* FLAME.
*THE HEAD EXPLODES!!!*
FC, WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT'D YOU...
PAINTED GUNPOWDER WHITE ...MIX IT WITH COKE.
YAH KNOW, I WAS THINKING. IF WE'D LET THAT THING GO ON, IT WOULD HAVE MAYBE CLEANED UP *ALL* THE COKE IN TOWN.
WELL, AT LEAST WE STILL GOT THE BOTTLE ...AND IT'S A VERY NICE BOTTLE, TOO.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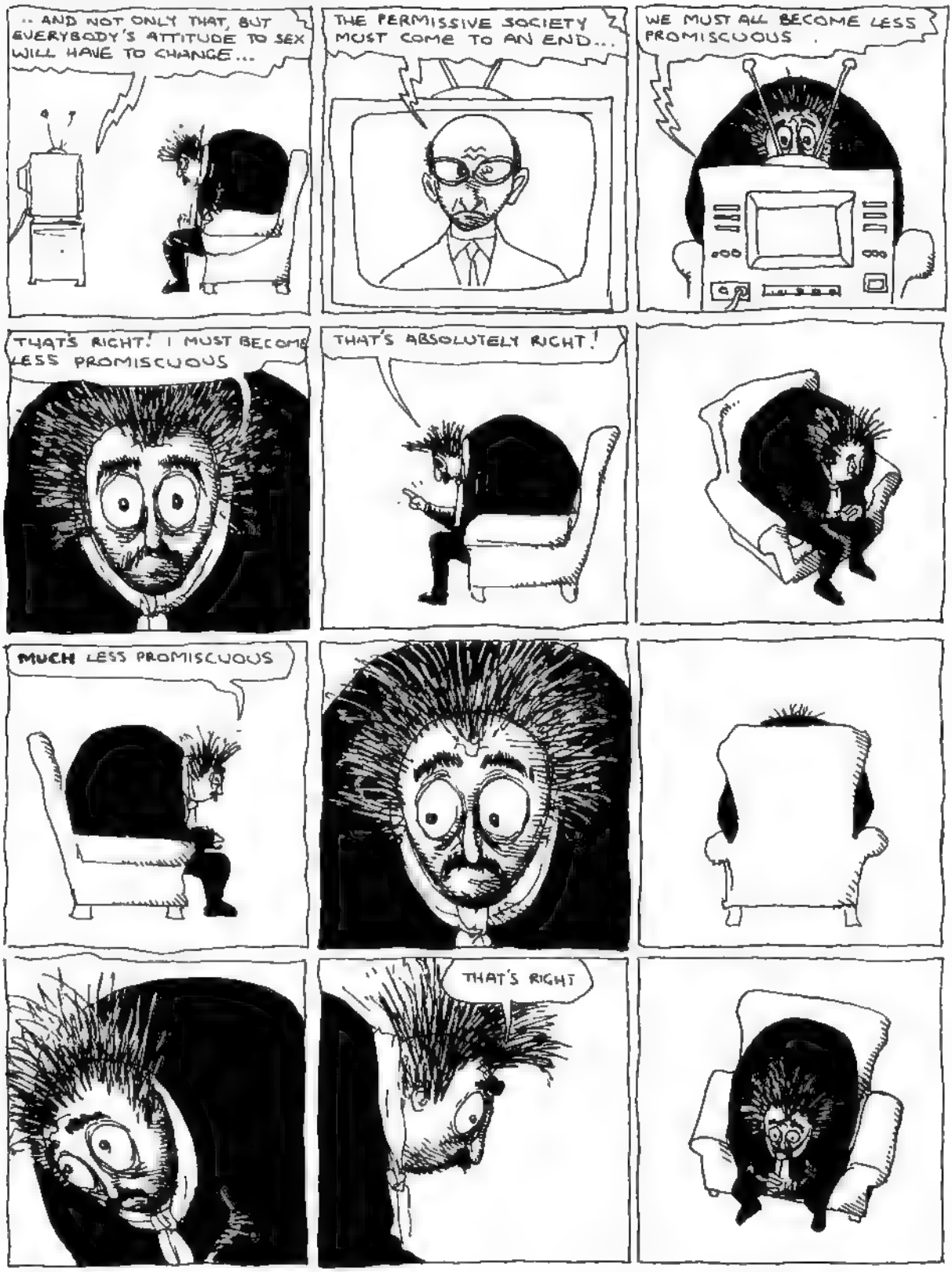
# PROMISCUITY

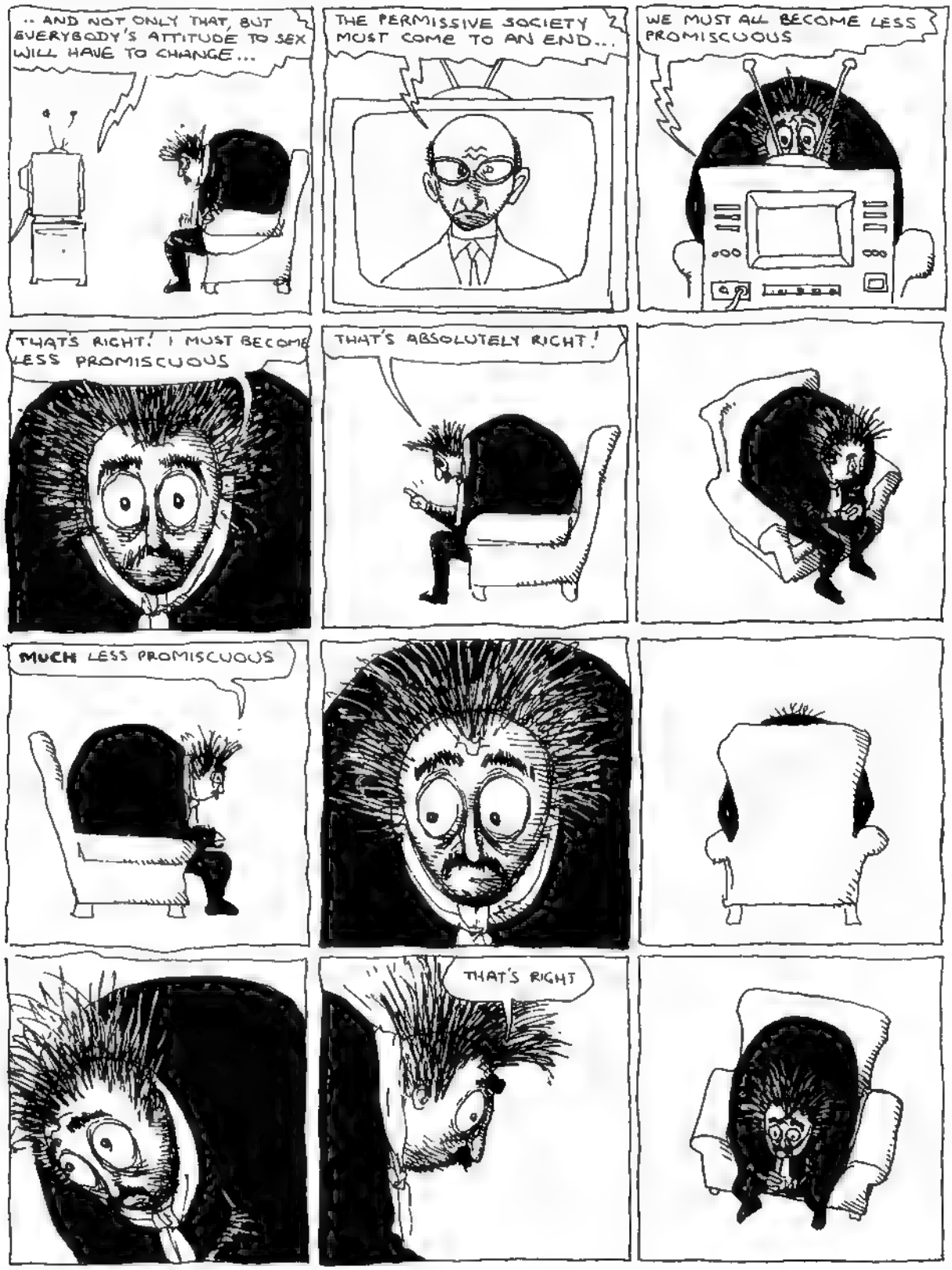
1 BOLLAND


.. AND NOT ONLY THAT, BUT EVERYBODY'S ATTITUDE TO SEX WILL HAVE TO CHANGE...
THE PERMISSIVE SOCIETY MUST COME TO AN END...
WE MUST ALL BECOME LESS PROMISCUOUS
THAT'S RIGHT! I MUST BECOME LESS PROMISCUOUS
THAT'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT!
MUCH LESS PROMISCUOUS
THAT'S RIGHT

MR. MAMOULIAN

# PROMISCUITY

BOLLAND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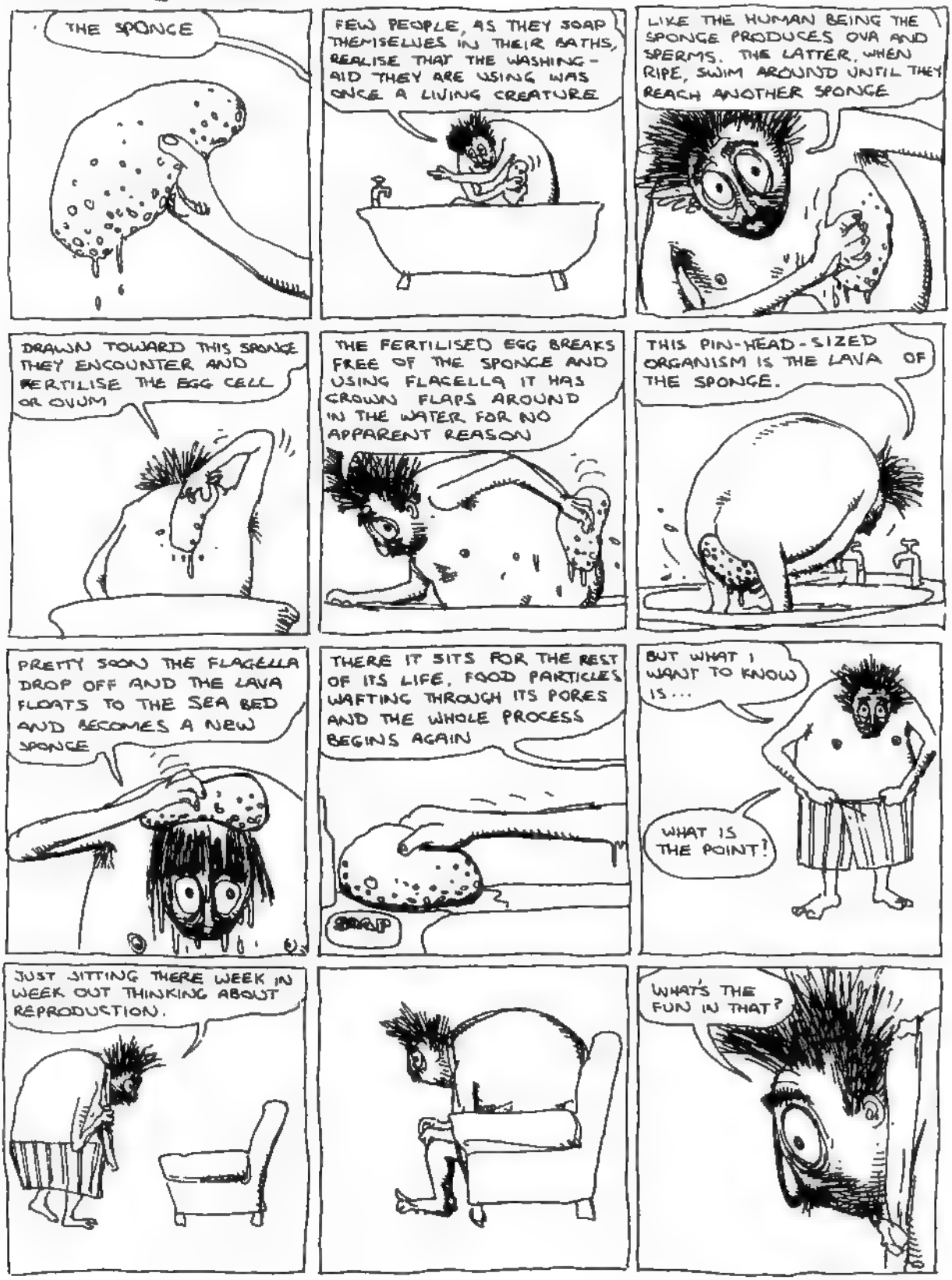
# THE SPONGE



BOLLAND 87

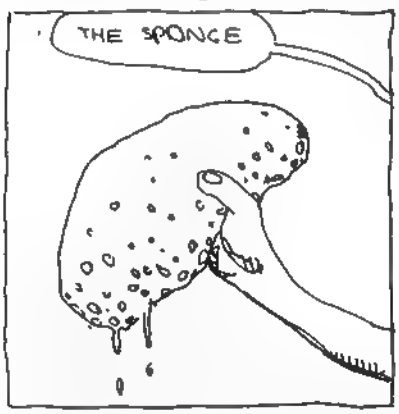

THE SPONGE
FEW PEOPLE, AS THEY SOAP THEMSELVES IN THEIR BATHS, REALISE THAT THE WASHING-AID THEY ARE USING WAS ONCE A LIVING CREATURE
LIKE THE HUMAN BEING THE SPONGE PRODUCES OVA AND SPERMS. THE LATTER, WHEN RIPE, SWIM AROUND UNTIL THEY REACH ANOTHER SPONGE
DRAWN TOWARD THIS SPONGE THEY ENCOUNTER AND FERTILISE THE EGG CELL OR OVUM
THE FERTILISED EGG BREAKS FREE OF THE SPONGE AND USING FLAGELLA IT HAS GROWN FLAPS AROUND IN THE WATER FOR NO APPARENT REASON
THIS PIN-HEAD-SIZED ORGANISM IS THE LAVA OF THE SPONGE.
PRETTY SOON THE FLAGELLA DROP OFF AND THE LAVA FLOATS TO THE SEA BED AND BECOMES A NEW SPONGE
THERE IT SITS FOR THE REST OF ITS LIFE, FOOD PARTICLES WAFTING THROUGH ITS PORES AND THE WHOLE PROCESS BEGINS AGAIN
SNAP
BUT WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS...
WHAT IS THE POINT!
JUST SITTING THERE WEEK IN WEEK OUT THINKING ABOUT REPRODUCTION.
WHAT'S THE FUN IN THAT?

MR. MAMOULIAN

# THE SPONGE



BOLLAND 87



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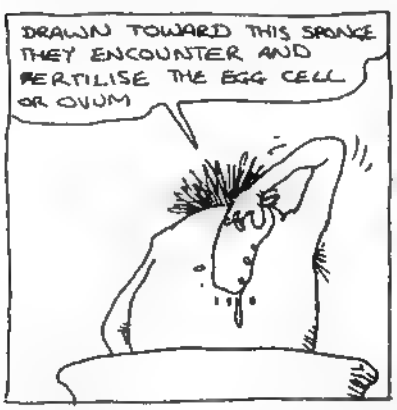


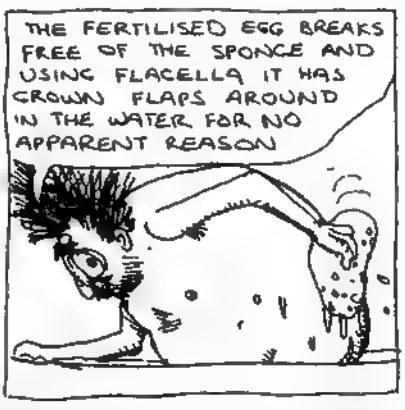
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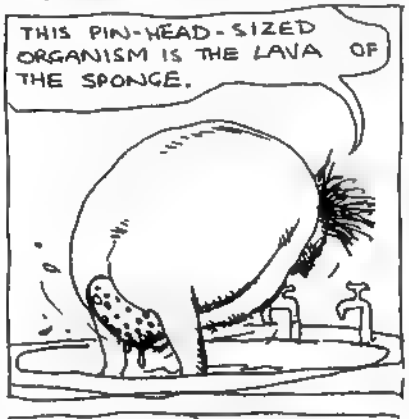
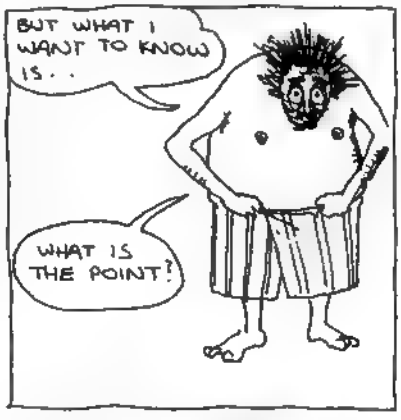
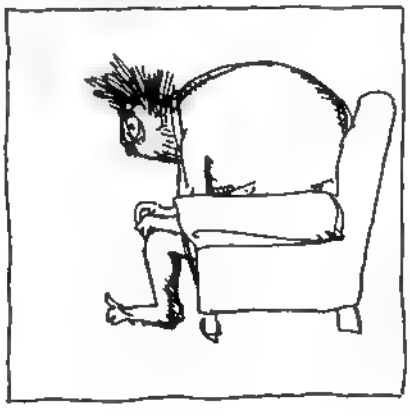
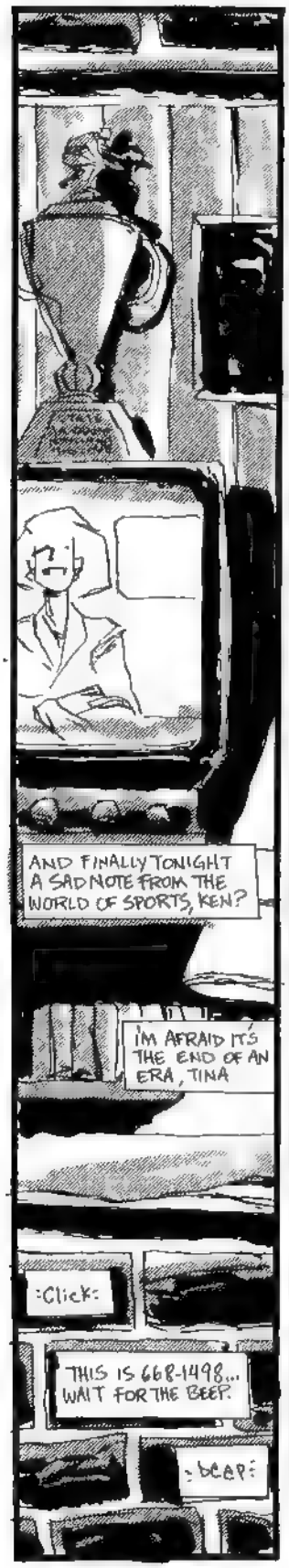






# BONESHAKER · first part ·

'92- PHILLIP HESTER


AND FINALLY TONIGHT A SAD NOTE FROM THE WORLD OF SPORTS, KEN?
I'M AFRAID IT'S THE END OF AN ERA, TINA
:Click:
THIS IS 668-1498... WAIT FOR THE BEEP.
:beep:

IN A PRESS RELEASE FROM THE WORLD WRESTLING LEAGUE IT WAS ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT A CALIFORNIA COURT HAS RULED "THE WRESTLING MONNIKER OF "BONESHAKER" TO BE THE SOLE PROPERTY OF THE WWL. THUS ENDING THE CAREER OF RETIRED PRO-WRESTLER, TITO CRANE WHO HAD BEEN USING HIS FORMER STAGE NAME TO MAKE PUBLIC APPEARANCES AT VARIOUS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SPORTS CARD SHOWS AS "BONESHAKER"
PLEASE PICK UP, MR CRANE
SIR, THIS IS LESLIE GRAHAM WITH THE POWER COMPANY... I'M JUST CALLING TO LET YOU KNOW... WELL, YOU MUST'VE RECEIVED ALL THE DISCONNECT NOTICES BY NOW AND WE JUST CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER...

AS WE ALL KNOW, PRO-WRESTLING IS BIG BUSINESS AND AS FURTHER PROOF OF THAT PROFIT-CONCIOUSNESS THE WWL HAS DECIDED TO DUB ONE OF THEIR YOUNGER, MORE FLAMBOUYANT WRESTLERS "BONESHAKER" PROMPTING THE MAN KNOWN AS BONESHAKER THE LAST 40 YEARS, TITO CRANE, TO FILE AN UNSUCCESSFUL SUIT AGAINST THE WWL.
MR CRANE?... Uhhh... LOOK, TECHNICALLY I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO EVEN MAKE THIS CALL, BUT Y'SEE, MY BOY, WELL HE'S A BIG FAN, UNDERSTAND?

CRANE BEGAN HIS CAREER IN 1953 AS THE GENTLEMAN WRESTLER "BONESHAKER BARITONE," KNOWN FOR OFTEN SINGING EXCERPTS FROM OPERAS AND POPULAR SHOW TUNES BEFORE EACH MATCH
...AND I JUST THOUGHT IF I CALLED AND... I DON'T KNOW... WE COULD WORK SOMETHING OUT... A PAYMENT PLAN OR...

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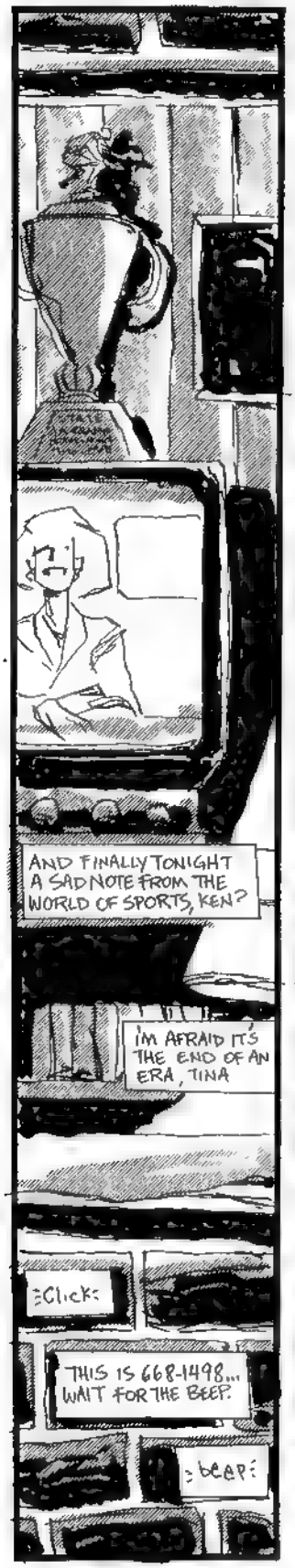
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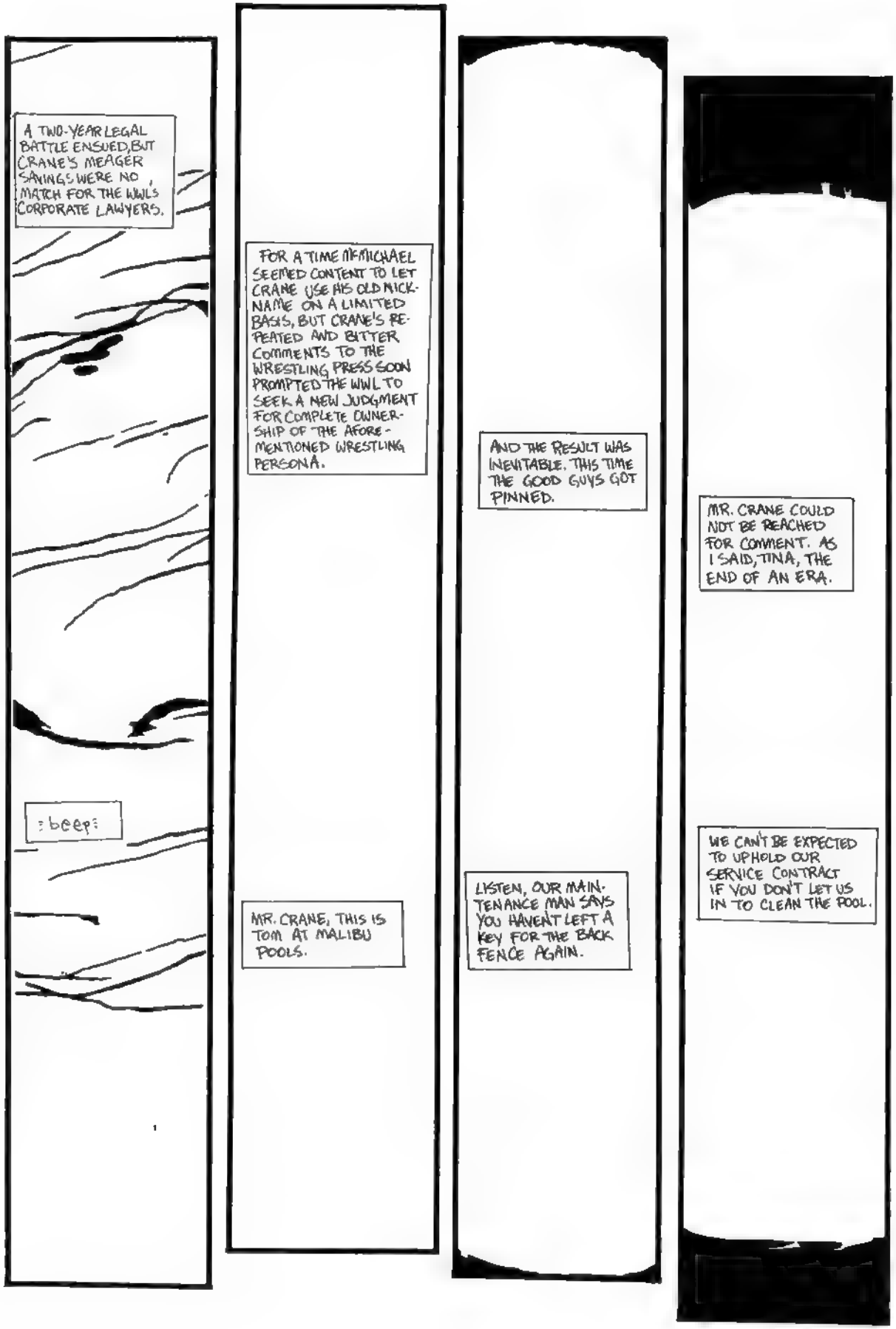
CRANE'S POPULARITY GREW STEADILY OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS, LEADING TO AN EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT WITH THE WWL AND A CLIMACTIC PAY-PER-VIEW EXTRAVAGANZA MATCH IN 1985 AGAINST CURRENT CHAMPION ROCK REGAN
HERE WE SEE CRANE APPLYING HIS PATENTED "SPINECRACKER" TO IRON MICK DULLIN 1982.
AND I JUST THOUGHT IF I CALLED AND... YOU KNOW... WE COULD WORK SOMETHING OUT OR...
DUE TO FAILING HEALTH CRANE WRESTLED LESS AND LESS, BUT THE WWL KEPT HIM ON, PORTRAYING NOT AN ATHLETE, BUT A LOVABLE, SIMPLE-MINDED BUFFOON.
...MR. CRANE, PLEASE PICK UP...
Ah, screw him
APPARENTLY NEITHER WWL OWNER LANCE MCMICHAEL OR CRANE HIMSELF WERE TOTALLY HAPPY WITH THIS ARRANGEMENT, AND SOON CRANE, RETAINING THE NICK-NAME "BONESHAKER" LEFT THE WWL IN 1990 FOR SEMI-RETIREMENT
:click:
:beep:
MCMICHAEL SOON SIGNED YOUNG WRESTLER ROLLY CASKEY, FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE ULTIMATE CONQUERER AND REDUBBED HIM "BONESHAKER" BRINGING PROTEST FROM LONGTIME WRESTLING FANS AND MR. CRANE.
YO, TITO! WHAT THE FUCK? WHERE YOU AT, eh?
:click:

CRANE'S POPULARITY GREW STEADILY OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS, LEADING TO AN EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT WITH THE WWL AND A CLIMACTIC PAY-PER-VIEW EXTRAVAGANZA MATCH IN 1985 AGAINST CURRENT CHAMPION ROCK REGAN
HERE WE SEE CRANE APPLYING HIS PATENTED "SPINECRACKER" TO IRON MICK DULLIN 1982.
AND I JUST THOUGHT IF I CALLED AND... YOU KNOW... WE COULD WORK SOMETHING OUT OR...
DUE TO FAILING HEALTH CRANE WRESTLED LESS AND LESS, BUT THE WWL KEPT HIM ON, PORTRAYING NOT AN ATHLETE, BUT A LOVABLE, SIMPLE-MINDED BUFFOON.
...MR. CRANE, PLEASE PICK UP..
Ah, screw him
APPARENTLY NEITHER WWL OWNER LANCE MCMICHAEL OR CRANE HIMSELF WERE TOTALLY HAPPY WITH THIS ARRANGEMENT AND SOON CRANE, RETAINING THE NICK-NAME "BONESHAKER" LEFT THE WWL IN 1990 FOR SEMI-RETIREMENT
:click:
:beep:
MCMICHAEL SOON SIGNED YOUNG WRESTLER ROLLY CASKEY, FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE ULTIMATE CONQUERER AND REDUBBED HIM "BONESHAKER" BRINGING PROTEST FROM LONGTIME WRESTLING FANS AND MR. CRANE.
YO, TITO! WHAT THE FUCK? WHERE YOU AT, eh?
:click: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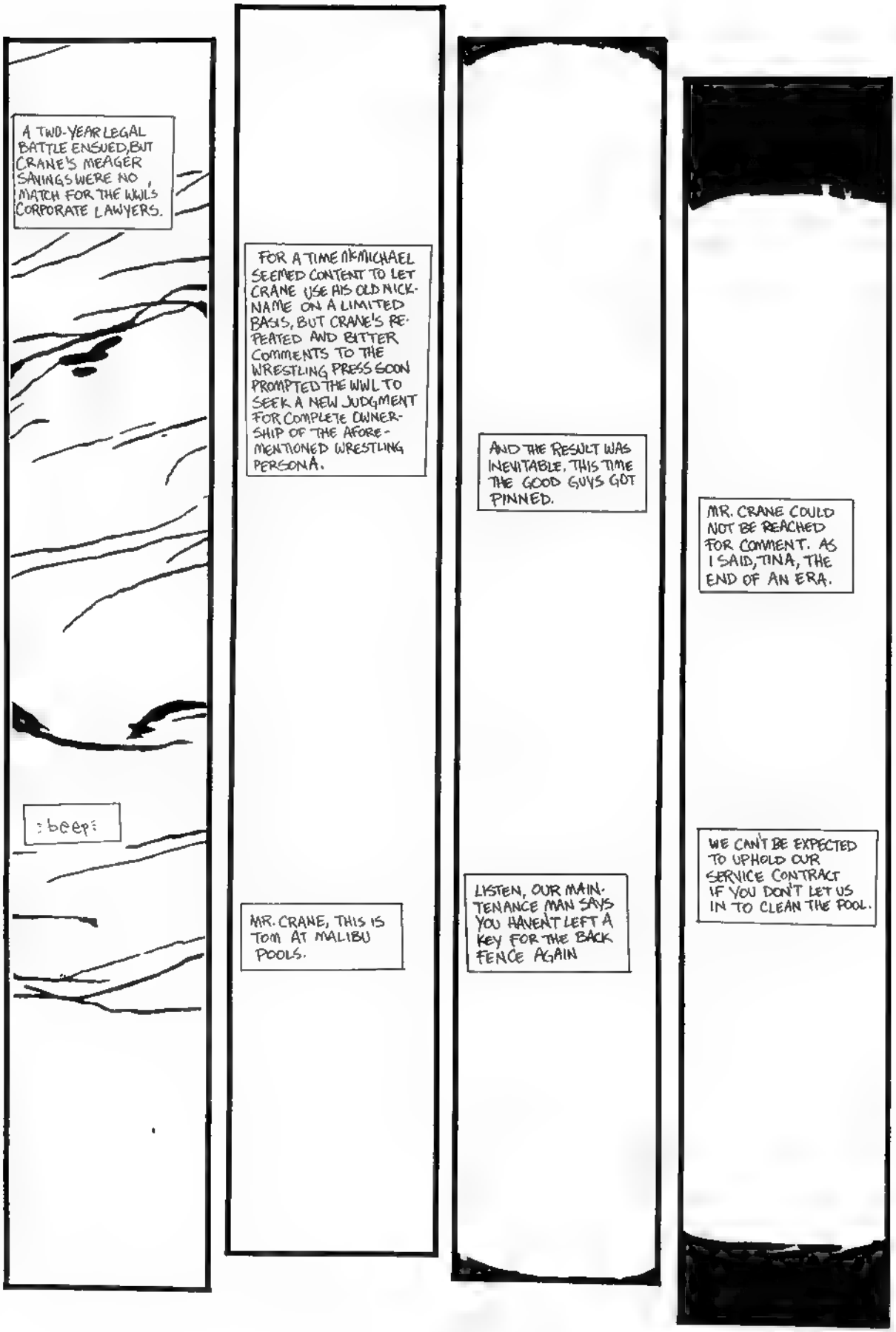
:beep:
FOR A TIME MICHAEL SEEMED CONTENT TO LET CRANE USE HIS OLD NICKNAME ON A LIMITED BASIS, BUT CRANE'S REPEATED AND BITTER COMMENTS TO THE WRESTLING PRESS SOON PROMPTED THE WWL TO SEEK A NEW JUDGMENT FOR COMPLETE OWNERSHIP OF THE AFOREMENTIONED WRESTLING PERSONA.
MR. CRANE, THIS IS TOM AT MALIBU POOLS.
AND THE RESULT WAS INEVITABLE. THIS TIME THE GOOD GUYS GOT PINNED.
LISTEN, OUR MAINTENANCE MAN SAYS YOU HAVEN'T LEFT A KEY FOR THE BACK FENCE AGAIN.
MR. CRANE COULD NOT BE REACHED FOR COMMENT. AS I SAID, TINA, THE END OF AN ERA.
WE CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO UPHOLD OUR SERVICE CONTRACT IF YOU DON'T LET US IN TO CLEAN THE POOL.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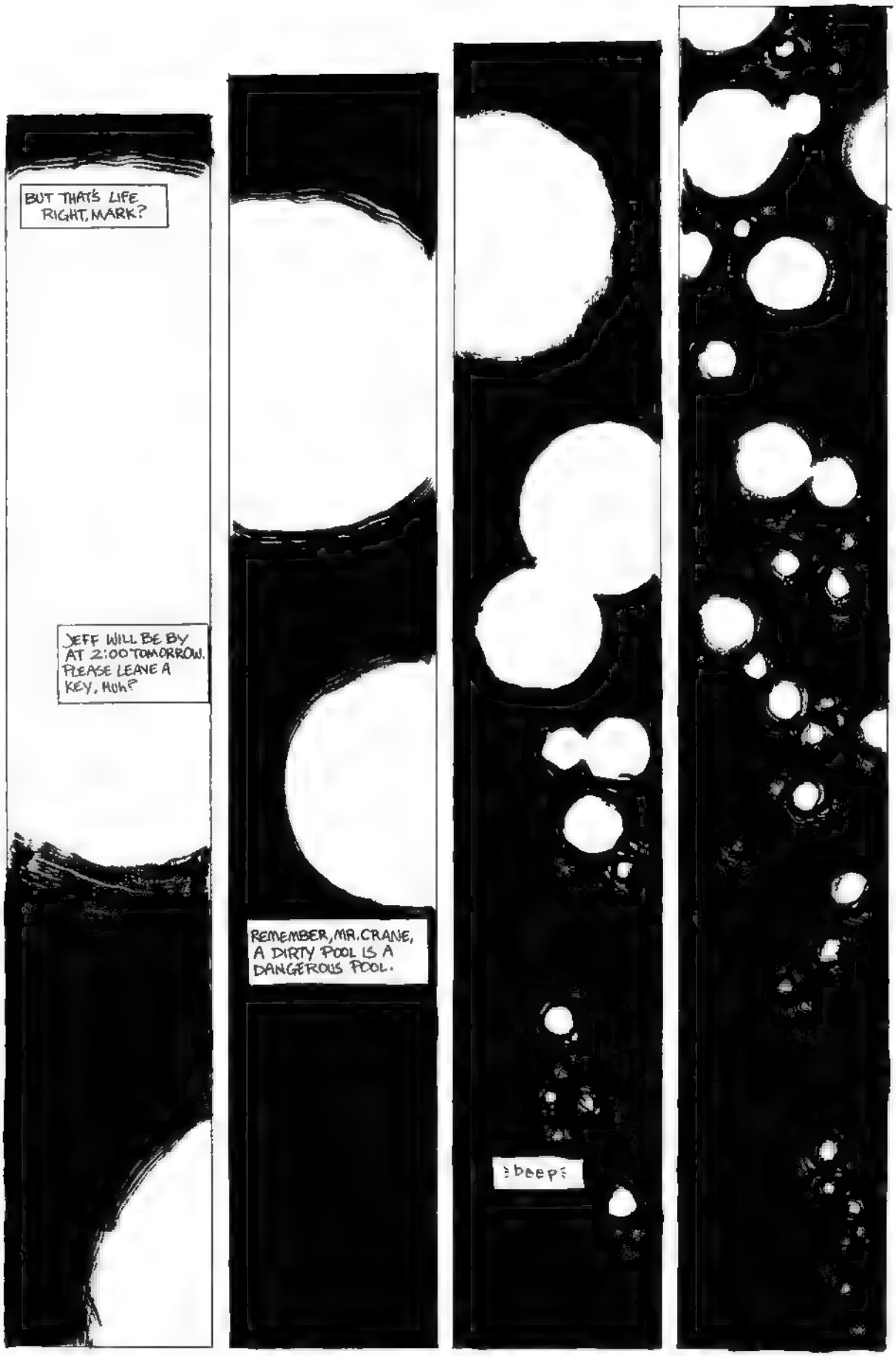
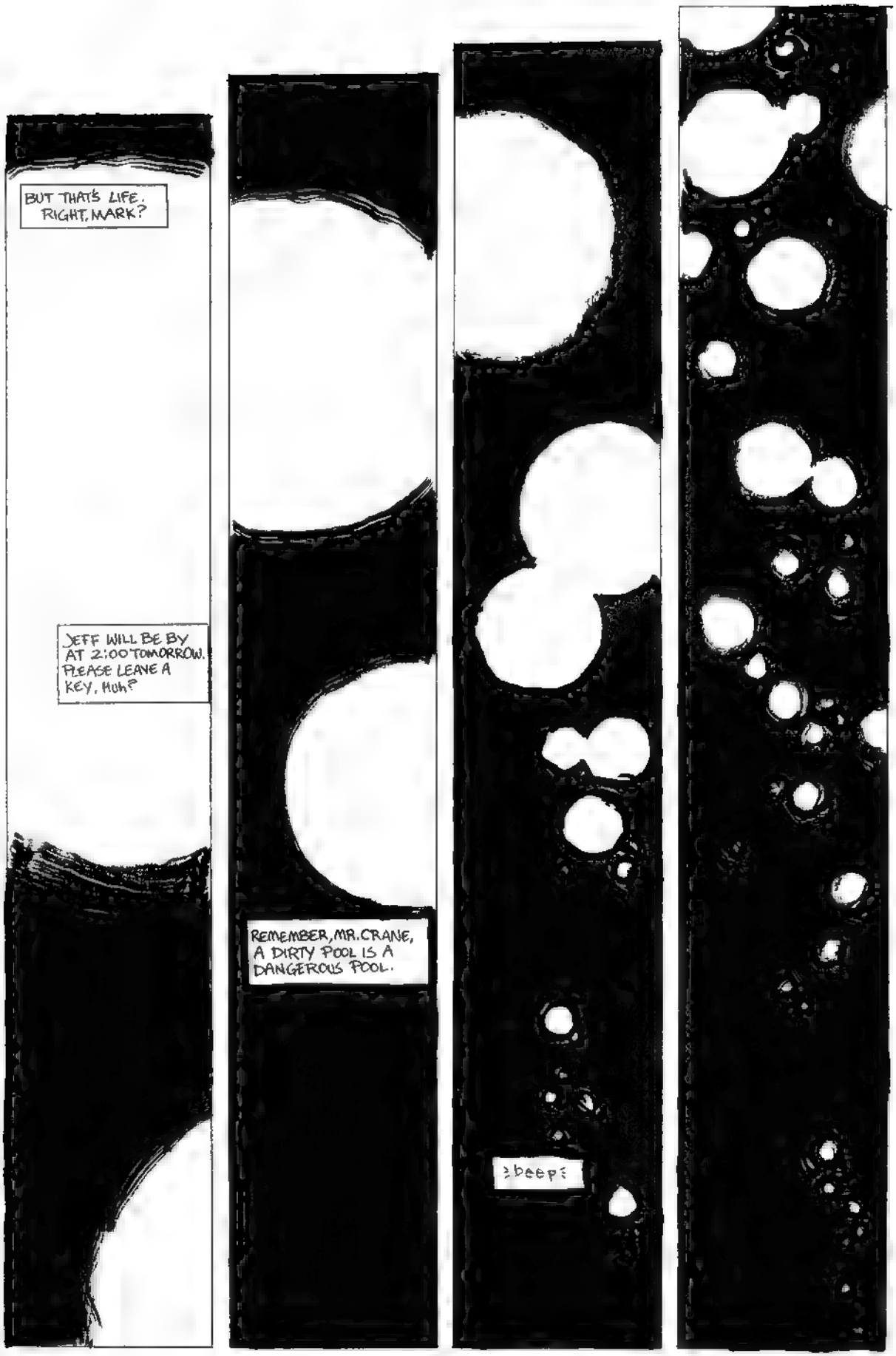

BUT THAT'S LIFE, RIGHT, MARK?
JEFF WILL BE BY AT 2:00 TOMORROW. PLEASE LEAVE A KEY, Huh?
REMEMBER, MR. CRANE, A DIRTY POOL IS A DANGEROUS POOL.
:beep: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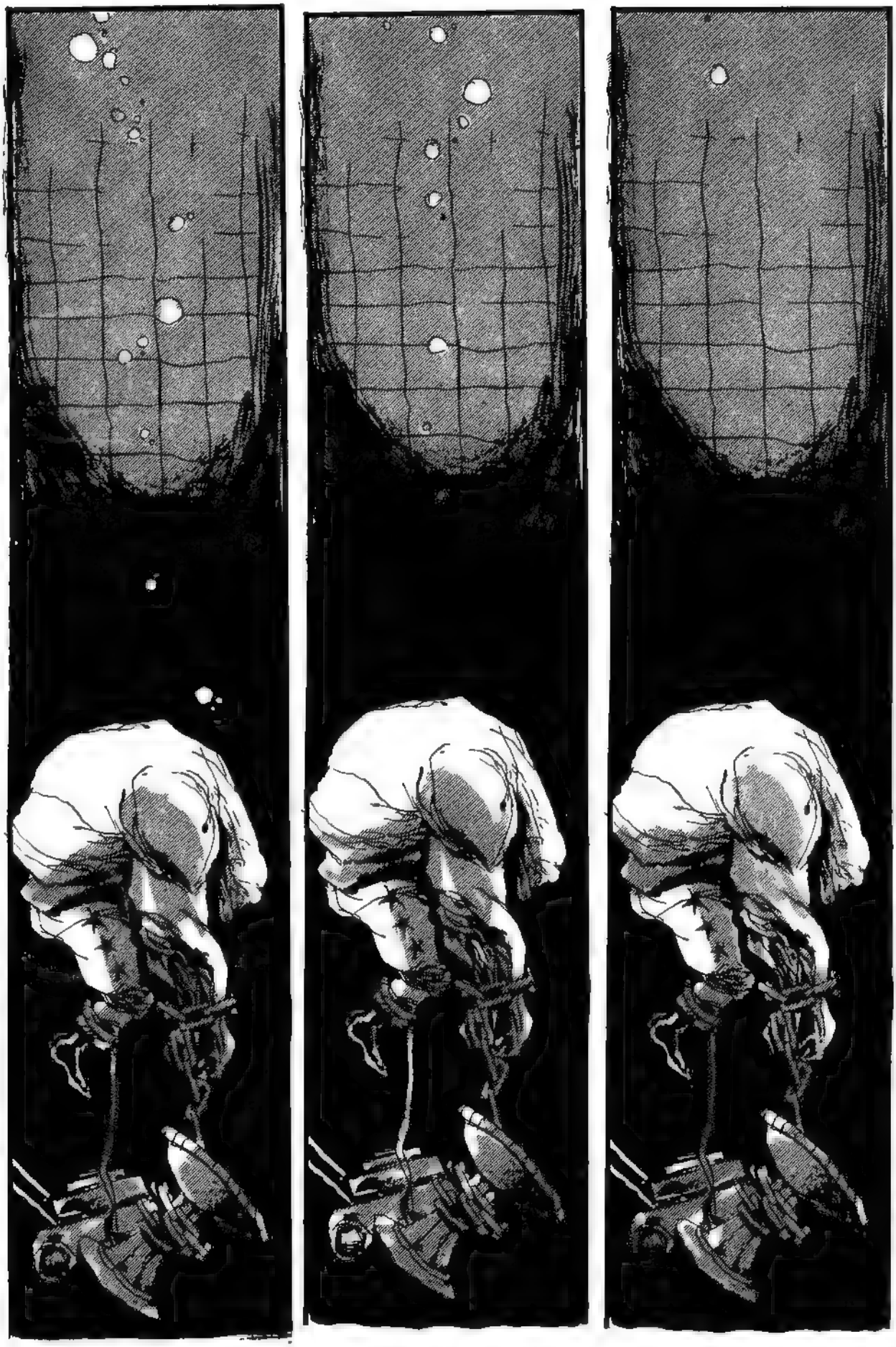
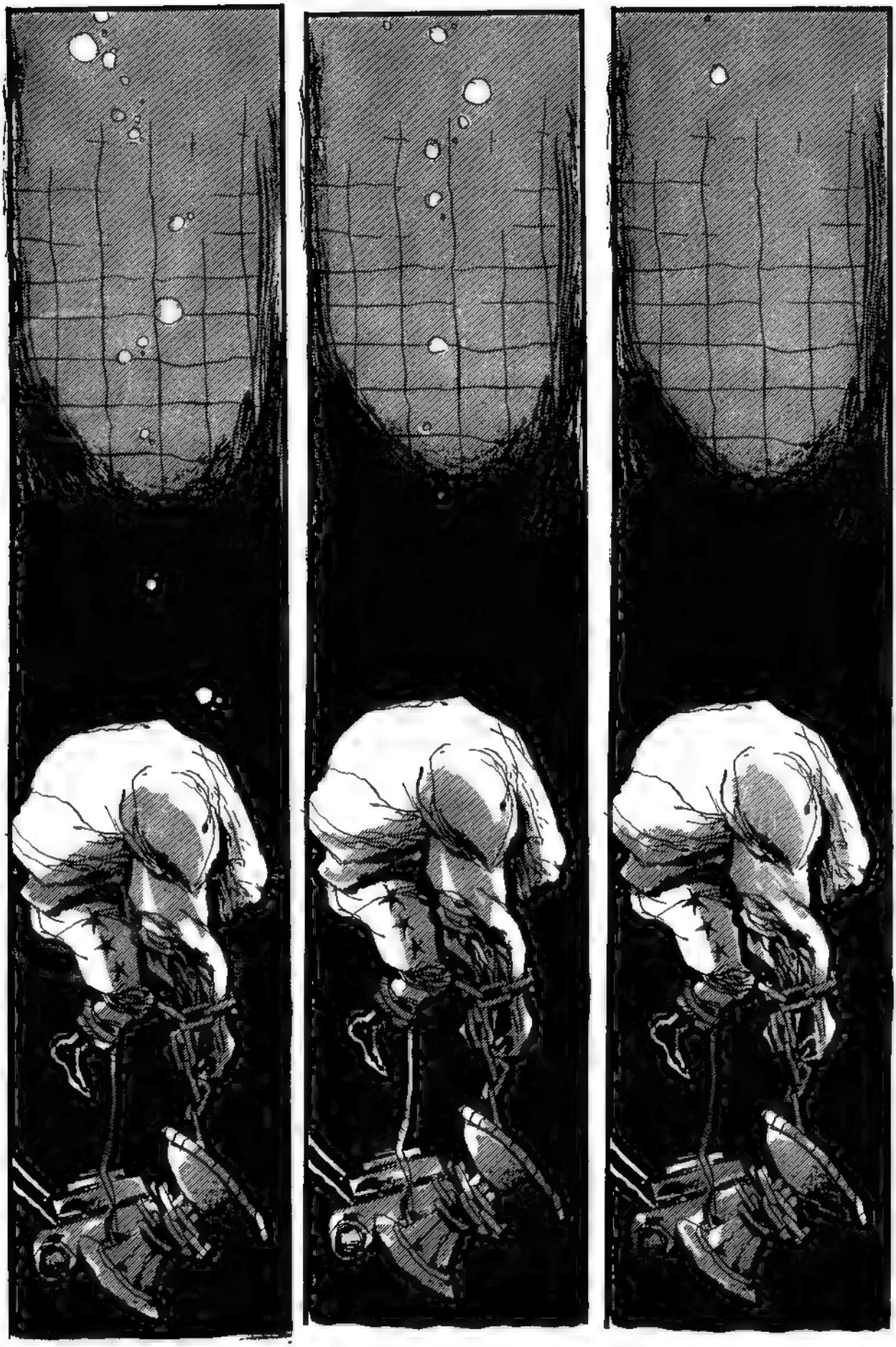


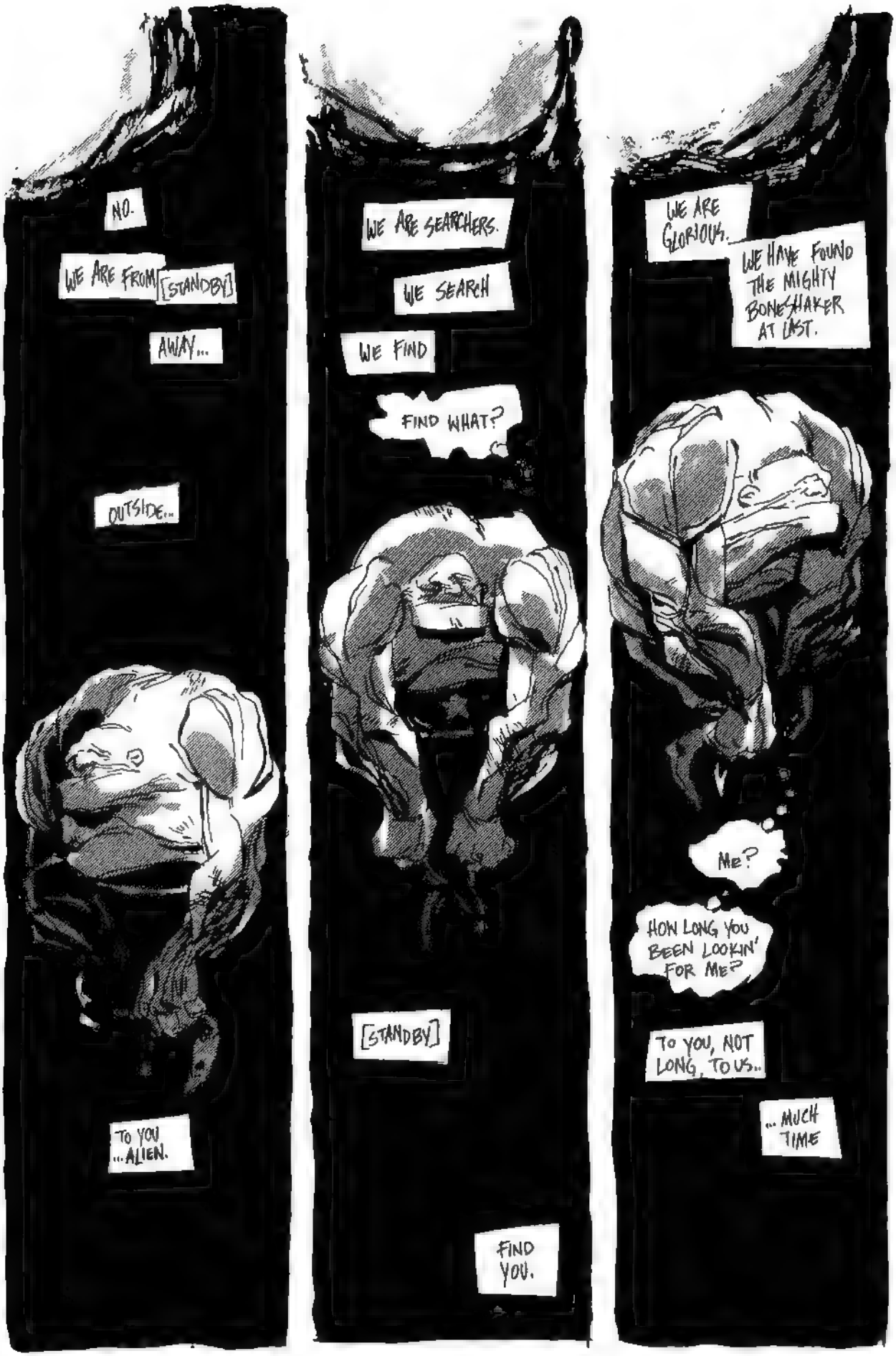


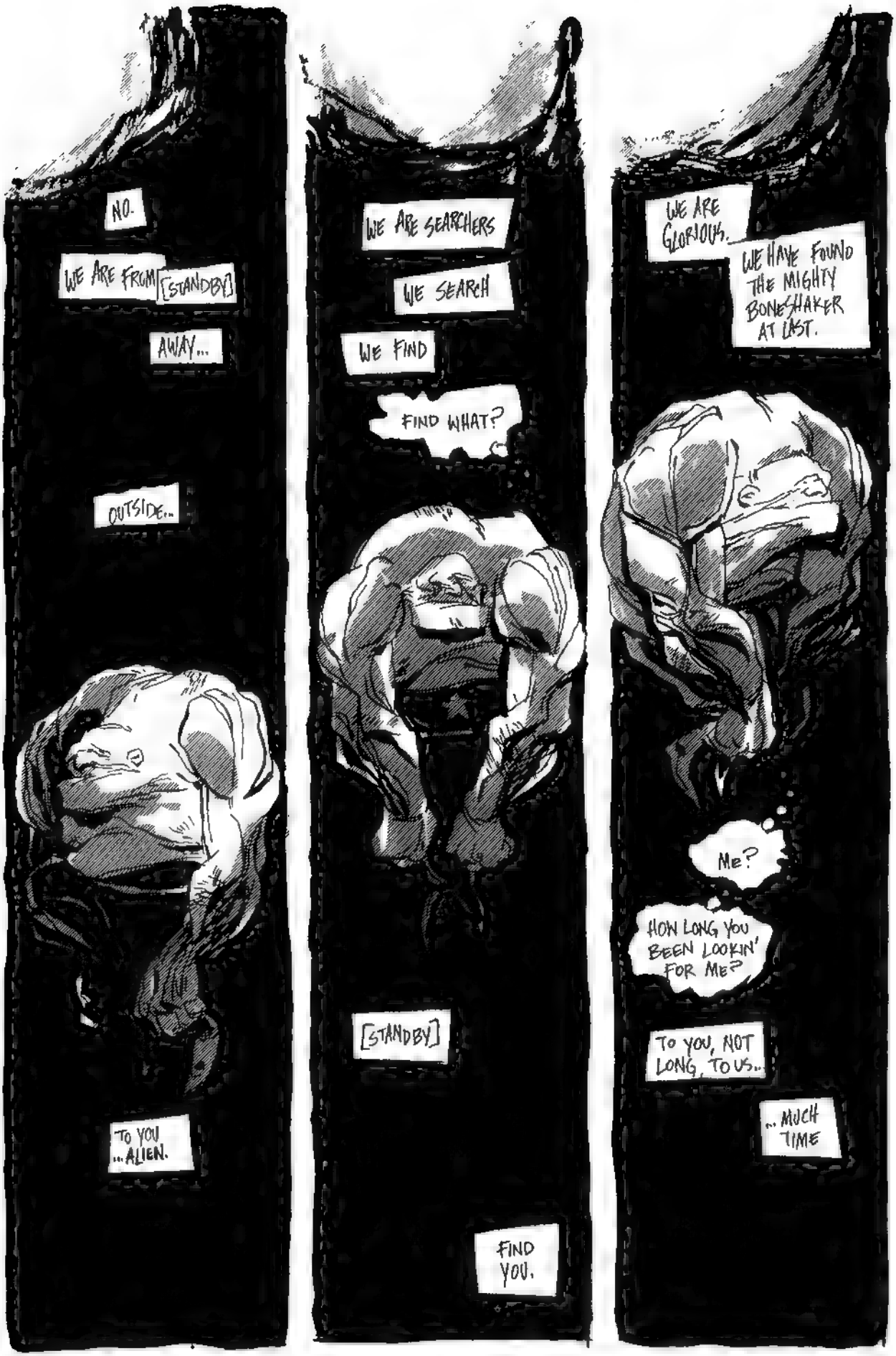
1/6

1/6

INDEED.
WE ARE GLORIOUS.
WH- WHO?
WHO ARE YOU? ANGELS? YOU ANGELS?
NO.
OH... SO... UHHH...
DEVILS?
[STANDBY]

INDEED.
WE ARE
GLORIOUS.
WH-
WHO?
WHO ARE YOU?
ANGELS?
YOU ANGELS?
No.
oh... so...
uhhh...
DEVILS?
[STANDBY]


NO.
WE ARE FROM [STANDBY]
AWAY...
OUTSIDE...
TO YOU ...ALIEN.
WE ARE SEARCHERS.
WE SEARCH
WE FIND
FIND WHAT?
[STANDBY]
FIND YOU.
WE ARE GLORIOUS.
WE HAVE FOUND THE MIGHTY BONESHAKER AT LAST.
ME?
HOW LONG YOU BEEN LOOKIN' FOR ME?
TO YOU, NOT LONG, TO US..
... MUCH TIME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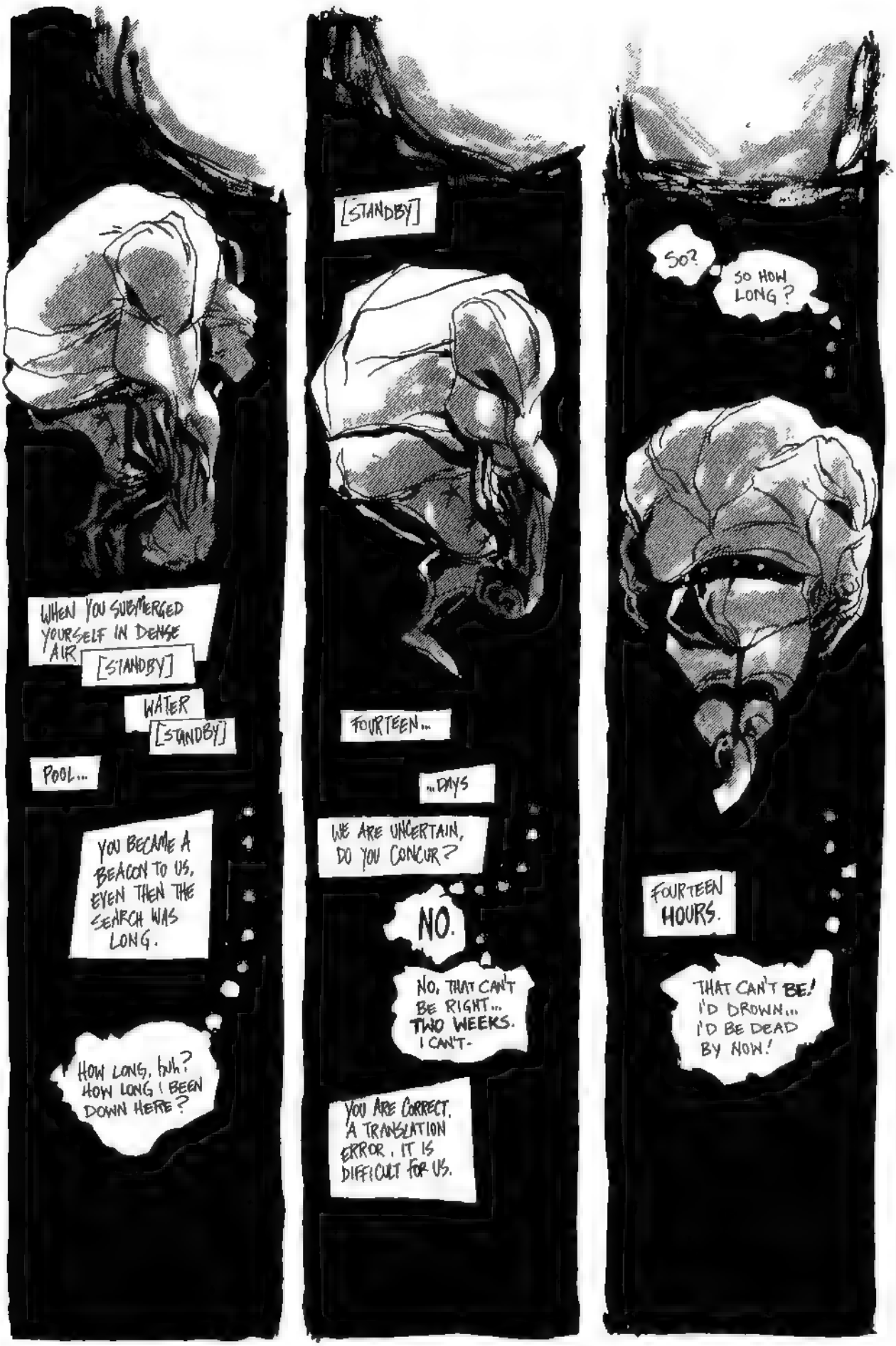
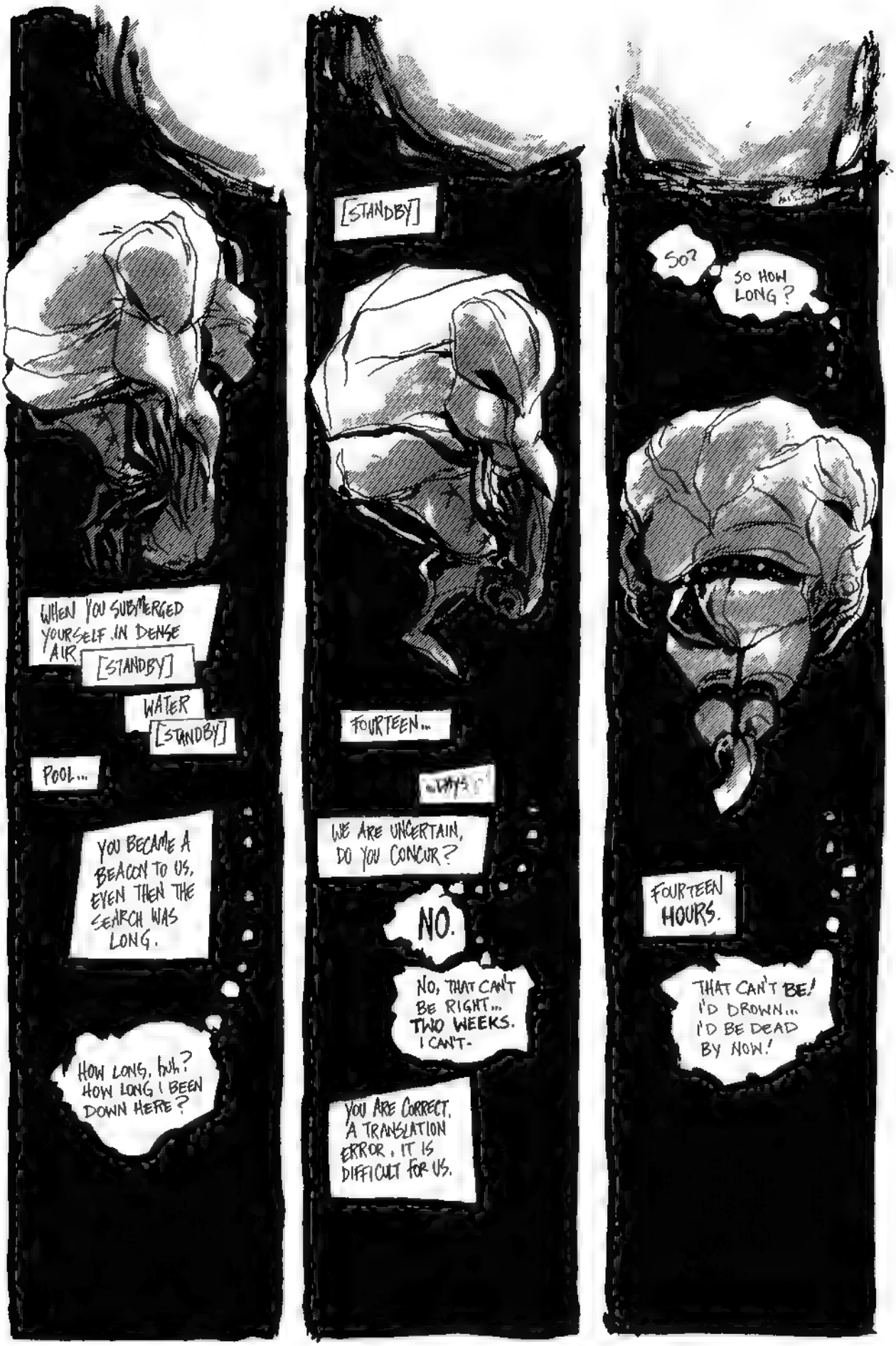

WHEN YOU SUBMERGED YOURSELF IN DENSE AIR
[STANDBY]
WATER
[STANDBY]
POOL...
YOU BECAME A BEACON TO US, EVEN THEN THE SEARCH WAS LONG.
HOW LONG, huh? HOW LONG I BEEN DOWN HERE?
[STANDBY]
FOURTEEN...
...DAYS
WE ARE UNCERTAIN, DO YOU CONCUR?
NO.
NO, THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT... TWO WEEKS. I CAN'T-
YOU ARE CORRECT. A TRANSLATION ERROR. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US.
SO?
SO HOW LONG?
FOURTEEN HOURS.
THAT CAN'T BE! I'D DROWN... I'D BE DEAD BY NOW!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SO?
SO HOW LONG?
FOURTEEN HOURS.
THAT CAN'T BE! I'D DROWN... I'D BE DEAD BY NOW!

[STANDBY]
IT IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT FOR US.
TO WHAT?
DIFFICULT TO DO WHAT?
TO...
[STANDBY]
...TO ASCERTAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIVING AND UNLIVING TISSUE.
AT MOST LEVELS THEY ARE...
...IDENTICAL.

[STANDBY]
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TO...
[STANDBY]
...TO ASCERTAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIVING AND UNLIVING TISSUE.
AT MOST LEVELS THEY ARE...
...IDENTICAL.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU MUST NOT WORRY YOUR SAFETY IS ASSURED YOUR EXISTENCE IS ENCODED. YOU ARE WITH US NOW.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I TRIED TO KILL MY SELF. HELL, I BEEN IN THIS POOL HALF A DAY! I SHOULD BE DEAD!
[STANDBY]
YOU ARE DEAD.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
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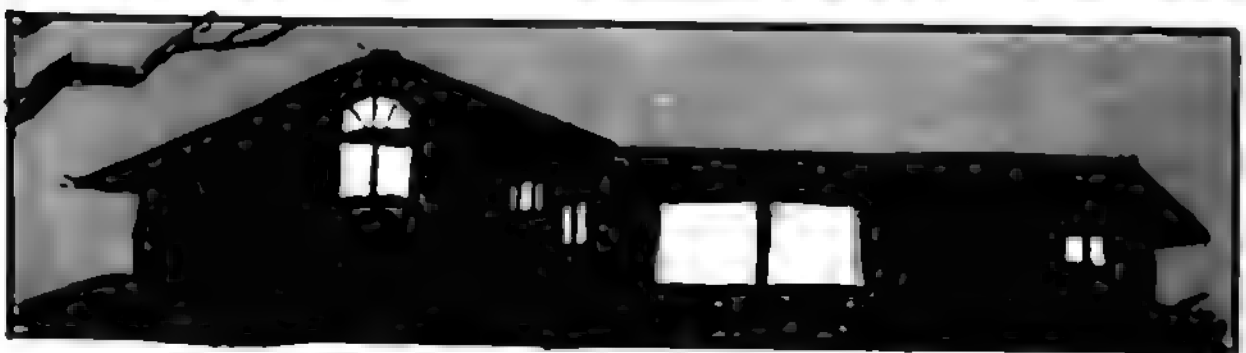
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I TRIED TO KILL MY SELF. HELL, I BEEN IN THIS POOL HALF A DAY! I SHOULD BE DEAD!
[STANDBY]
YOU ARE DEAD.

YOU COME NOW.
YOU COME WITH US.
MORE LATER



MORE LATER

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# NEGATIVE BURN

an anthology

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by Mike Wieringo and Craig Gilmore
(colored by Andrew Barlow)

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH MAD HATTER STUDIOS INTERNATIONAL

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Staff Letterer: Roxanne Starr
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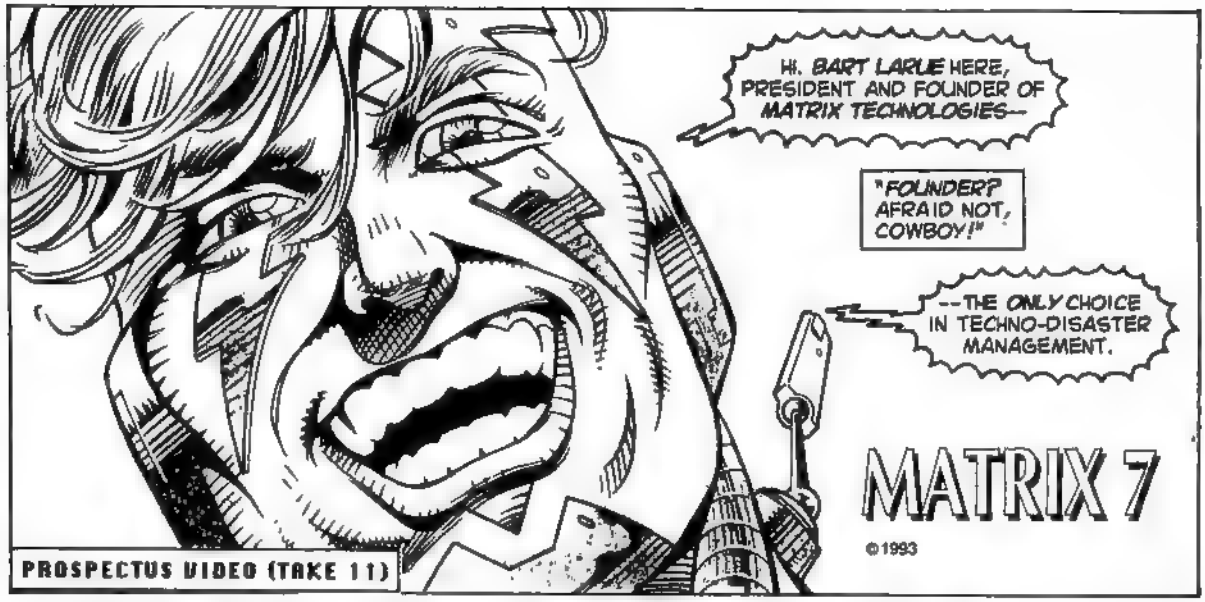
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MATRIX 7
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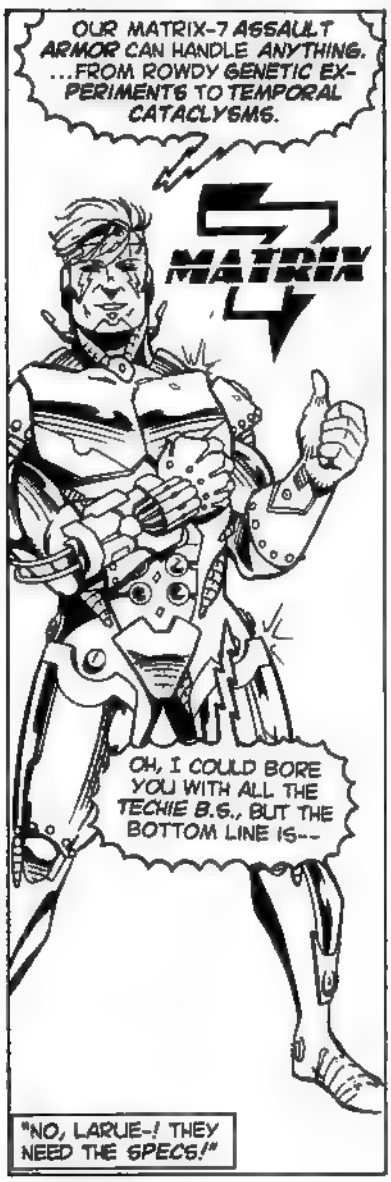
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WHAM
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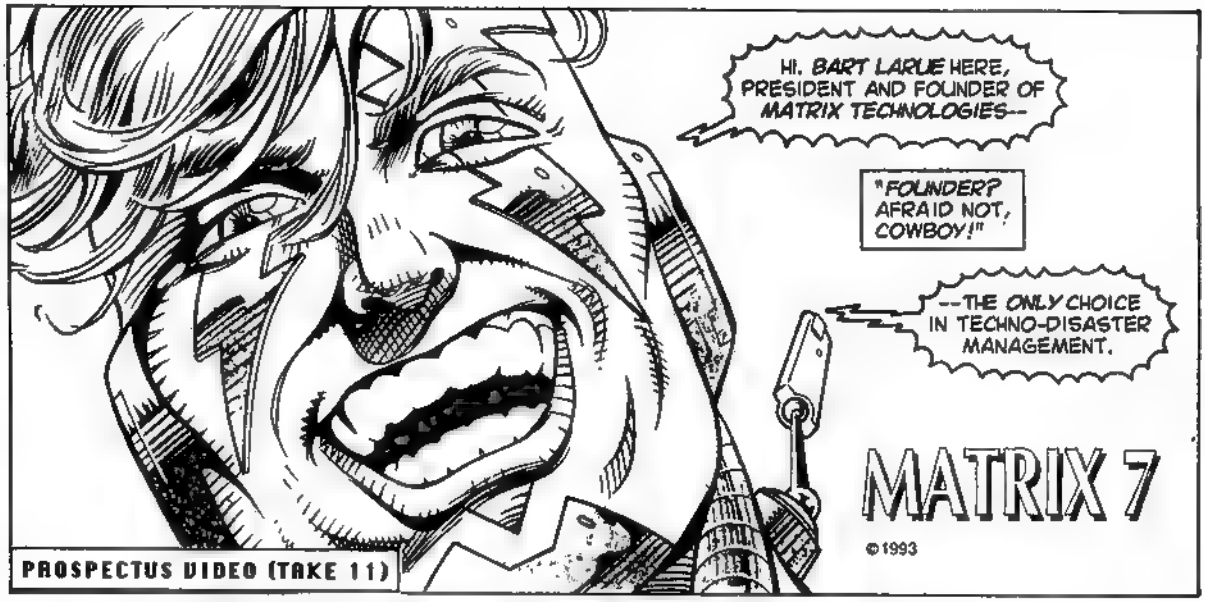
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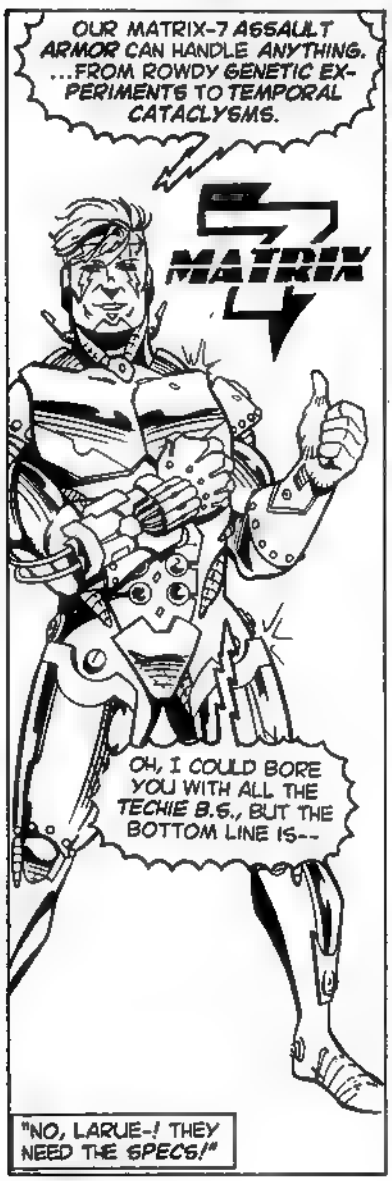
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DAMMIT, LARUE!
QUIT JERKING AROUND! THERE'S ONLY ENOUGH JUICE FOR ONE MORE RUN!
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO RENT THE CAMERAS OR THIS AIRFIELD ANY LONGER. AND ANOTHER THING--
--IF I'M GOING TO WEAR THIS SLUT SUIT OF YOURS, YOU CAN AT LEAST STICK WITH MY SCRIPT!
CAMERAS LOCKED IN. ROLLING IN 5...4...
THAT'S WHAT THE SUIT'S FOR, BABE. SO THE INVESTORS WON'T NOTICE MY SCREW UPS.
WHRRR
"3...2...1..."
FSSSHHH
"ENGAGED--GO COOL IT, KIDS. WE'RE ROLLING."

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WHRRR
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FSSSSHHH
"ENGAGED--SO COOL IT, KIDS. WE'RE ROLLING."

SPEC'S RIGHT, BART-- STRICTLY BUSINESS NOW. TARGETS CLOSING IN. I'M UPPING ADRENAL FLOW...
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, LARUE? YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO LIFT THE STASIS GUN.
I GOT IT.
THEY'RE ON TOP OF HIM! C'MON, SPEC, WHY CAN'T HE...
CHILL OUT, KAYLA!
SK-ZZZT
I TOLD YA--
--I GOT IT.
QUIT SHOWBOATING, LARUE!
KWO
KLANG

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I TOLD YA--
--I GOT IT.
QUIT SHOWBOATING, LARUE!
KWO
KLANG

"YOU LET THE DRONES GET TOO CLOSE-- YOU'RE WASTING JUICE! NOW THE GUN'S OFF LINE."
BUT IT LOOKED COOL!
PROSPECTUS: CAM 2
"WE GOTTA SELL 'EM WITH SHOWBIZ, KAYLA."
"HMPH. THOSE CLUSTERS ARE COMING IN FAST, LARUE. GET AWAY FROM THE--"
HF
THE CAMERA, LARUE! OH NO... OUR DEPOSIT!
"LET'S TAKE HIM DOWN A PEG, SPEC. BOTTOM OUT HIS INSULIN."
SNAP!
"WISH I COULD DO THE SAME WITH HIS TESTOSTERONE."
"THIS'LL REMIND HIM THIS ISN'T SOME MATCH FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP BELT. THIS IS FOR REAL."
"IDIOT! HE HIT THE THRUSTERS! HIS POWER LEVEL'S TOO LOW--"

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"--HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT!"
POF
PAF
"REROUTE BACKUPS FOR THE PROTECTIVE FIELD."
--SO HIS HEAD WON'T SPLIT LIKE THE MELON IT IS.
FIRST + AID
ANOTHER CAMERA, THANKS, LARUE.
FIRST
KRAKAWWW

"--HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT!"
POF
PAF
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FIRST AID
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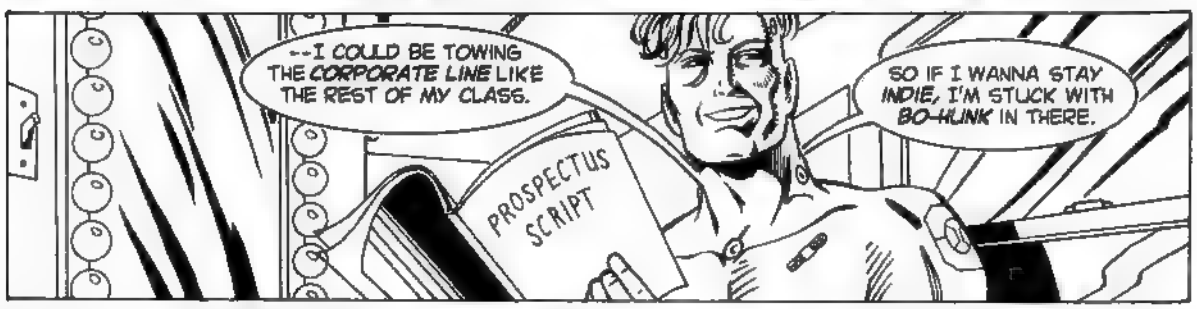
FIRST
KAAA

IF ONLY I DIDN'T HAVE A FORTUNE IN TECH WIRED TO THAT CHUMP BODY OF HIS...
I THINK YOU BOTH SCREWED UP AND SET US BACK! KNOW WHAT ELSE...?

I THINK YOU CAN'T STAND HIM BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO MUCH ALIKE!
THIS IS NOT THE TIME, SPEC.

GIRL, WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF GRAD SCHOOL, YOU WERE PACKIN' SOME SERIOUS TESTOSTERONE YOURSELF.
GUESS IT COULD BE WORSE. MAYBE--


--I COULD BE TOWING THE CORPORATE LINE LIKE THE REST OF MY CLASS.
PROSPECTUS SCRIPT
SO IF I WANNA STAY INDIE, I'M STUCK WITH BO-HUNK IN THERE.

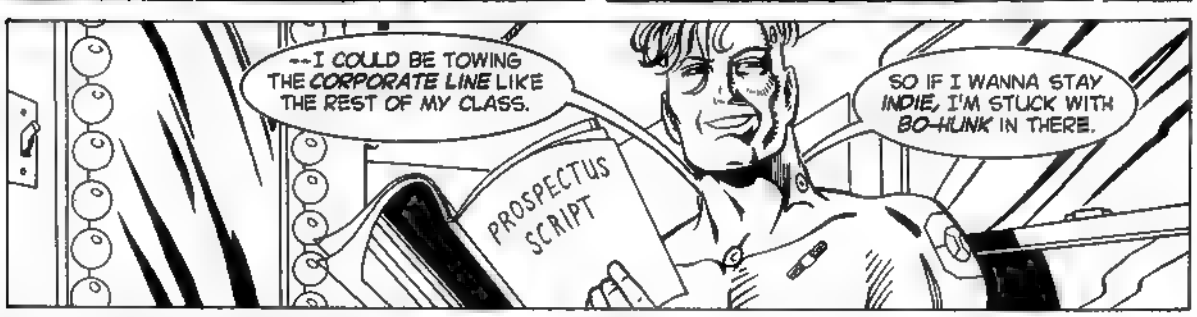
BUT HE NEEDS YOU, TOO, KAYLA! LIKE WHERE'S HIS CAREER BEEN TAKING HIM LATELY?

HEY. BART LARUE, HERE, PRESIDENT AND... CO-FOUNDER OF MATRIX TECHNOLOGIES--
THE ONLY CHOICE IN TECHNO-DISASTER MANAGEMENT.

IF ONLY I DIDN'T HAVE A *FORTUNE* IN *TECH* WIRED TO THAT CHUMP BODY OF HIS...
I THINK YOU *BOTH* SCREWED UP AND SET US BACK! KNOW WHAT ELSE...?

I THINK YOU CAN'T STAND HIM BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO MUCH *ALIKE!*
THIS IS *NOT* THE TIME, SPEC.

GIRL, WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF GRAD SCHOOL, YOU WERE PACKIN' SOME *SERIOUS TESTOS-TERONE* YOURSELF.
GUESS IT COULD BE WORSE. *MAYBE--*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# *The Apparition*

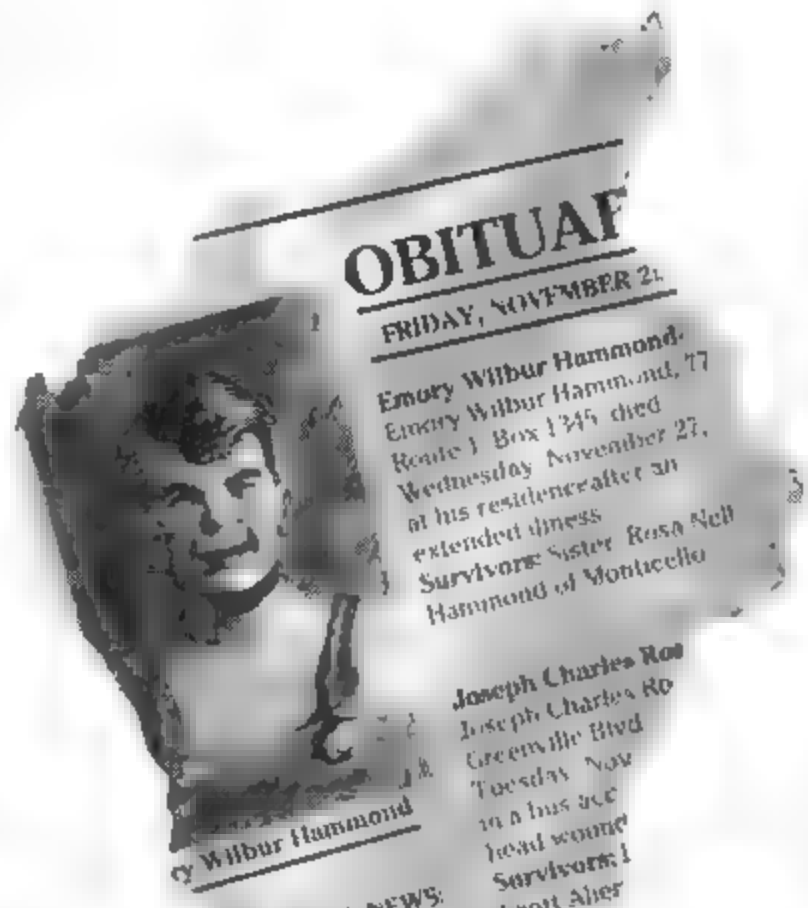
a n  o r d i n a r y  m a n

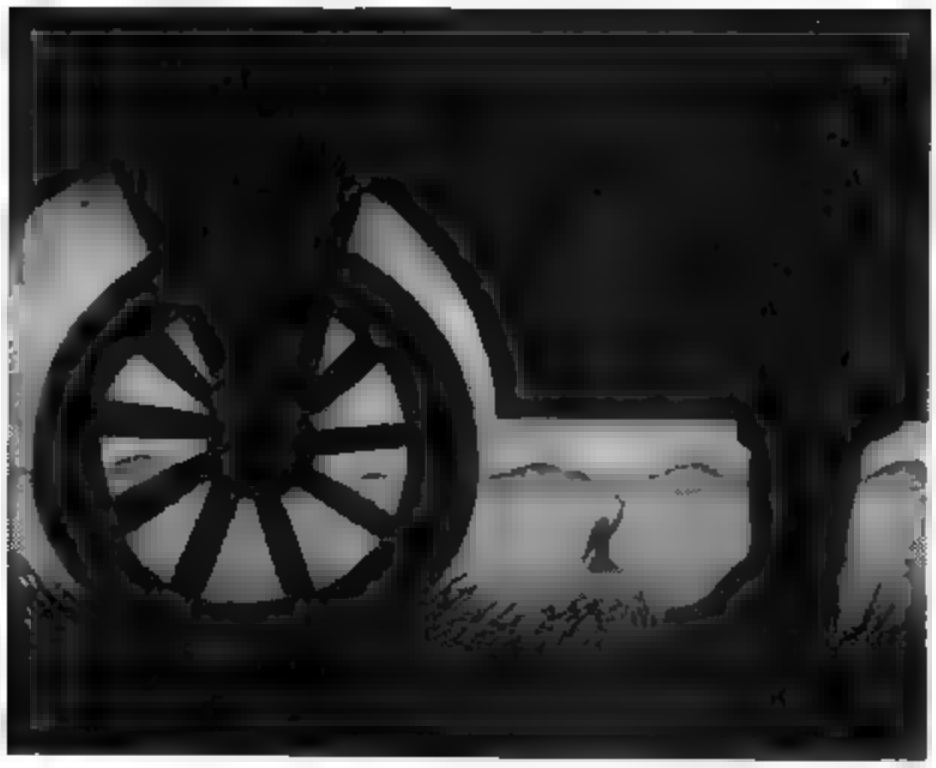

***james t. pruett***
author/co-creator

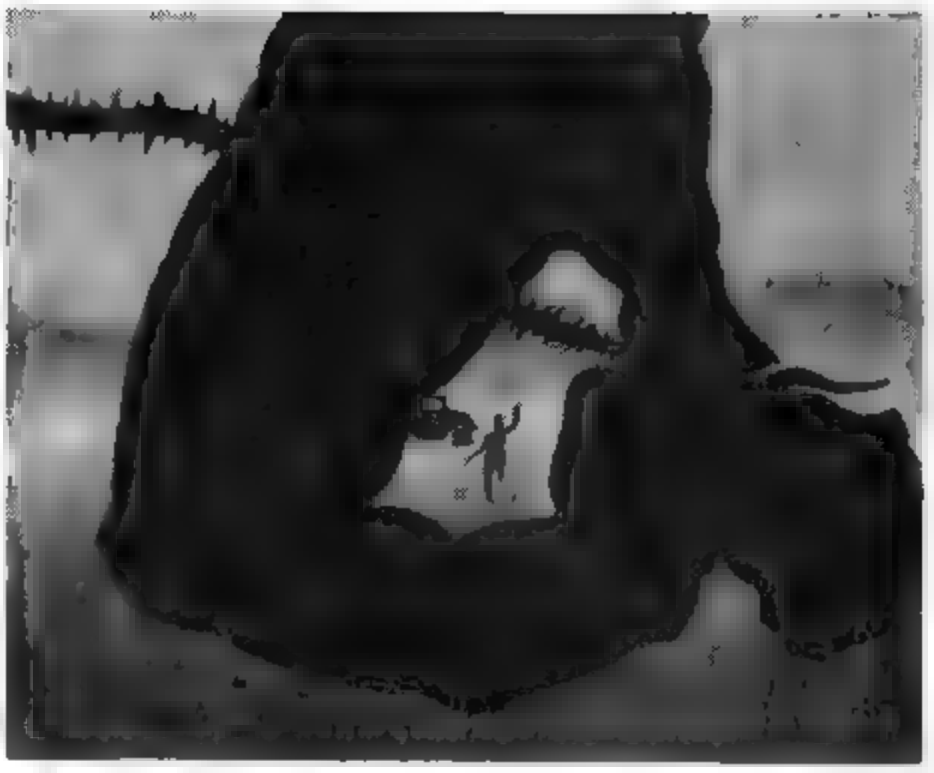
***nathan massengill***
illustrator/co-creator

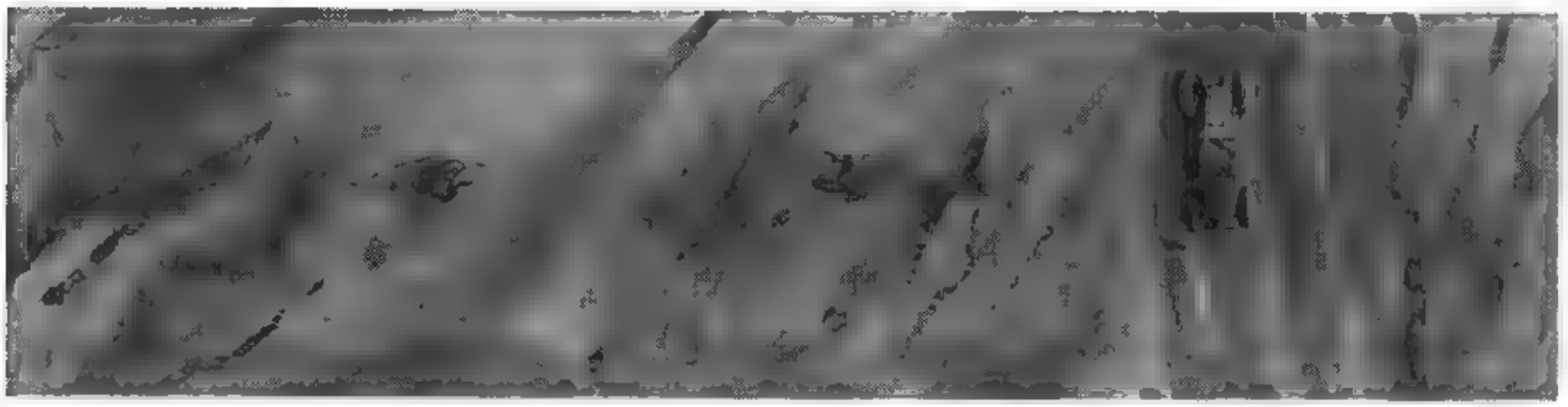
***joseph pruett***
editor

***steve reid***
graphic design







...MAYBE THE DOCTOR'S REPORTS DON'T SEEM TOO OPTIMISTIC...

...BUT I THINK YOU'RE IMPROVING, EMORY. AT LEAST I BELIEVE YOU ARE.

R..ROSA...
..but i'm not.

IT'S SO DARK IN HERE, AND IT'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY OUTSIDE.

LOOK AT THAT DOVE SPLASHIN' ABOUT IN THAT BATH OF YOURS, EMORY! WHY, I BET THAT HE'S ALMOST AS HAPPY AS I AM.

ARE YOU REALLY HAPPY, VIOLET? HAPPY HERE? IN AN ORDINARY HOUSE WITH AN ORDINARY HUSBAND?

EMORY! AFTER SUCH A PERFECT CEREMONY, SUCH A PERFECT DAY, YOU CAN ASK SUCH A THING! WHY, I'D NO MORE BE WITHOUT YOU THAN THAT BIRD WOULD BE WITHOUT WINGS.

I'VE NEVER TOLD YOU THIS, BUT EVER SINCE THAT DAY YOU CAME VISIT'N ME IN THAT FIELD, I KNEW... KNEW OUR LOVE WOULD LAST FOREVER.

FOREVER.

CAN'T LIVE FOREVER, BUT...

HE'S THE ONLY FAMILY I HAVE LEFT. WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN CLOSE, ESPECIALLY SINCE HIS VIOLET PASSED ON.

SOMETIMES HE SEEMS LIKE HE'S OFF IN SOME OTHER WORLD. I'LL BE TALKING TO HIM AND HE'LL JUST DRIFT AWAY.

CANCER MUST BE MORE TORMENTIN' THAN DEATH HIMSELF.

AND EVEN THOUGH I KNOW HE'S SUFFERING, I CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF HIM LEAVING ME...

.. OF HIS BEING ..

. GONE.

EMORY WILKINS HAMMOND.

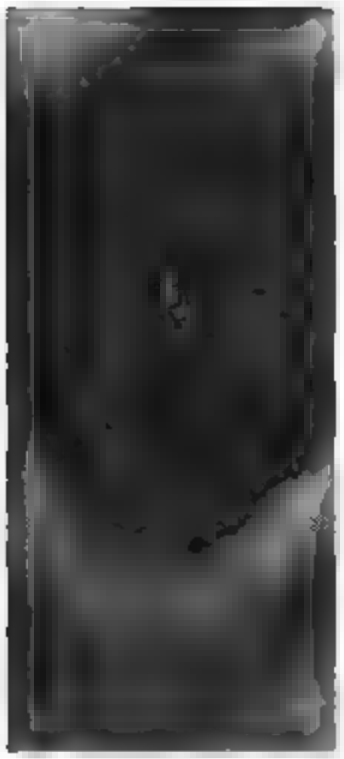
YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND SEEMS TO RETURN HERE FREQUENTLY. IS THIS PLACE YOUR MOST PRECIOUS MEMORY?
Y-YES, IT IS. VIOLET'S HERE.
THEN 'TIS SETTLED.
WHO ARE YOU?

MERELY AN APPARITION.

I THINK YOU'RE AN ANGEL.

IS THAT SO? WELL, AN ANGEL WOULD TELL YOU THAT YOUR SISTER, ROSA, NEEDS YOUR REASSURANCE.

ALSO, THESE WORDS OF COMFORT SHALL BE YOUR LAST WHILE EARTHBOUND.



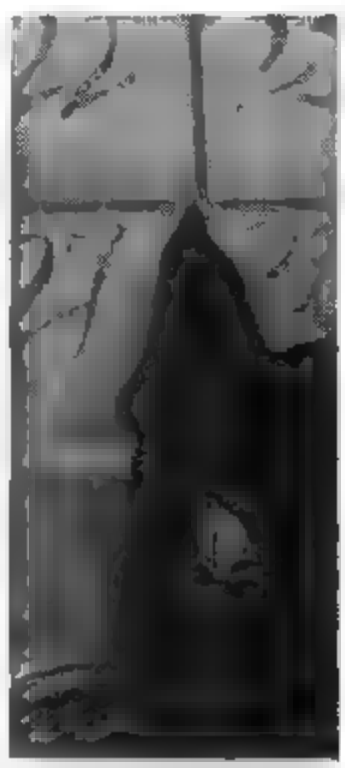
EMORY? I HEARD.
ROSA.

DEATH. COMES.
NO, YOU MUST NOT...

I'M READY.
I DO...NOT FEAR.

THANK YOU... FOR LOVING ME SO WELL.

I'M GOING NOW. YOU NEED YOUR REST.



HISSSS

THIS SPIRIT FALLS TO MY JURISDICTION. THE PAIN OF YOUR DUTY WILL SERVE NO PURPOSE. I ASK THAT WE MAY GO BEFORE YOUR THANKLESS TASK SHALL COMMENCE.

ARE YOU PREPARED TO COME WITH ME NOW?

YES

WELL CHOSEN.

HOME!
INDEED YOU ARE, SPIRIT. HERE YOU WILL REMAIN FOR A SHORT TIME WITH ONE WHO HAS BEEN WAITING ANXIOUSLY.
AND THEN THERE IS THE MATTER OF MEETING THE GALILEAN...

CHICAGO
MY REAL NAME IS JOSEPH MORANO, BUT I CALLED MYSELF THE DARK ARCHER.
YEAH -- STUPID. I KNOW, BUT EVERY VIGILANTE'S GOTTA HAVE AN IMAGE.
DEAD AIM
"Bless Me, Father..."
I FOUGHT THE MOB. THE PROBLEM WAS, THE MOB WAS MY OWN FAMILY -- PARTICULARLY MY TWIN BROTHER, ROBERT.
I'D HAD ENOUGH OF THEIR MURDERS AND MANIPULATIONS. HE WASN'T PLEASED ABOUT MY LEAVING BIG SURPRISE.
VHS
..TONIGHT'S TOP STORY -- THE MYSTERIOUS DARK ARCHER...
FOR IDENTICAL TWINS ROB AND I DIDN'T HAVE A LOT IN COMMON
OH, GET REAL
ALTHOUGH HELPFUL AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE HAS CONSISTENTLY CONDEMNED THE VIGILANTE'S EFFORTS AS ANARCHY...

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IN RESPONSE, AN ALLEGED DEATH THREAT FROM THE DARK ARCHER WAS RECEIVED BY D.A VINCENT WILLIAMS AT THE COOK COUNTY COURT-HOUSE THIS AFTERNOON...
DEATH THREAT? BUT I DIDN'T...
THE THREATENING MESSAGE, ATTACHED TO ONE OF THE VIGILANTE'S TRADEMARK WHITE ARROWS WAS SHOT INTO MR. WILLIAMS' OFFICE
WITNESSES REPORTED SEEING THE BLACK CLAD VIGILANTE FLEE-ING A NEARBY ROOFTOP CARRYING A CROSSBOW
ROBERT
D.A. HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE REGARDING VIGILANTE'S ACTIONS
INSIDE
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT HAD NEVER OCCURED TO ME THAT HE COULD USE OUR RESEMBLANCE AGAINST ME.
6:35--THE PRESS CONFERENCE HAD ALREADY STARTED.
...AND THIS DEATH THREAT SEEMS TO PROVE THE MENTAL INSTABILITY OF A MAN WHO'D TAKE THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS.
KNOWING ROBERT, I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
00:00

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00:00

...BUT HASN'T THIS DARK ARCHER BEEN HELPFUL IN THE ROUTING OF ORGANIZED CRIME?
IN SOME WAYS HE HAS, IN OTHER WAYS HE HAS NOT. THE CRIMINALS ARE NOW ACTING OUT OF DESPERATION--
"SO NOW, MORE OF US ARE APT TO BE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE."
02:00
SCREW US OVER, WILL YA, JOE--
--WELL, SCREW YOU BACK.
FREEZE, ROB.
JOE--!
BOMB IN THE BASEMENT, HUH? NOT TOO ORIGINAL. MOVE AWAY FROM IT. SLOWLY.
LIKE HELL!
FATHUNK
YOU BETRAYED US, JOE NOW SAY UNCLE.
GET..
ROB HAD ALWAYS BEEN STRONGER THAN ME.

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GET
ROB HAD ALWAYS BEEN STRONGER THAN ME.

...OFF!!
CRACK!
BUT NOT BY MUCH.
SMSHHH
BZZZZZ
BZZZZZ
THE FIRE ALARM! LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE SHOULD--uh--EVERY-ONE SHOULD MOVE OUT THE DOORS CALMLY!
EXIT
NO TIME TO DIFFUSE IT--HAVE TO GET US OUT.
00:30
hnf C'MON, ROB--ALMOST THERE.
uhhnn whs...
00:08
WHACKRSSSH!
NOT GONNA TAKE ME!

...OFF!!
CRACK!
BUT NOT BY MUCH.
SHSHHH
BZZZZZ
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hnf.. ROB!!
I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO DIE. HE WAS MY BROTHER AFTER ALL...
SO I HID. FROM MYSELF AND FROM THE FAMILY...
FATHER JOSEPH--?
KNOCK KNOCK
FATHER JOE, ARE YOU THERE?
KNOCK KNOCK
IRONICALLY, IN HIDING I FOUND THE FORGIVENESS I NEEDED.
--BUT IT WASN'T THE FAMILY'S...
YOLANDA! IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE--YOU SHOULD BE HOME!

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I DID SOMETHING BAD. MAMA SAID THERE WAS CONFESSIONS TONIGHT, AND THAT I SHOULD GO.
YOU COULDN'T HAVE DONE SOMETHING THAT BAD. I'LL GIVE YOU RECONCILIATION, BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S NECESSARY.
MAMA STILL CALLS IT CONFESSION.
LIKE THE SPANISH INQUISITION...
SO WHAT'D YOU DO THAT WAS SO BAD, SWEETIE?
I HIT MY LITTLE BROTHER
WHY'D YOU DO THAT?
HE WAS KICKING MY PRESENTS UNDER THE TREE!
ARE YOU SORRY YOU HIT HIM?
HE DESERVED IT.
DO YOU LIKE ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, YOLANDA?
WELL... HE COMES UP WITH GOOD GAMES -- AND HIS FUNNY FACES MAKE ME LAUGH.
SEE? YOU REALLY LOVE YOUR BROTHER. YOU JUST HIT HIM BECAUSE HE HURT YOUR FEELINGS. AM I RIGHT?
YEAH.
"WELL, THEN, I WANT YOU TO GO TELL YOUR BROTHER YOU'RE SORRY AND THAT YOU LOVE HIM, OKAY?"
"OKAY, FATHER JOE."
THEN I ABSOLVE YOU OF YOUR SINS, IF ANY, IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.
YOU DID IT RIGHT HERE?
CHRIST FORGIVES YOU ANYWHERE, KID.
thump!

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FUNNY. I DIDN'T SEE HIM COME IN...
WAIT HERE, YOLANDA. I'LL WALK YOU HOME.
BLESS ME, FATHER, FOR I HAVE SINNED. I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER MY LAST CONFESSION.
I'VE ALWAYS FELT CLAUSTROPHOBIC IN THESE OLD BOOTHS
DO YOU REMEMBER THE ACT OF CONTRITION?
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING.
"OKAY I'LL SAY IT FOR YOU 'OH MY GOD, I AM HEARTILY SORRY FOR HAVING OFFENDED THEE, AND I DETEST ALL MY SINS--"
YOU BEEN A PRIEST LONG?
--er.. TWO YEARS. WHY?
THAT VOICE.
JUST CURIOUS.
MAN, IT'S GETTING WARM IN HERE.
SO WHAT DID YOU NEED HELP WITH?
I HAVE THIS BROTHER, SEE? HE HURT MY FAMILY--BETRAYED US. I COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND THE GUY.
SEEMS TO BE A RUN ON ABUSED BROTHERS TONIGHT.
YOU SHOULD REALLY TRY TO FORGIVE YOUR BROTHER.
WHY SHOULD I?

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BECAUSE I KNOW, ALRIGHT? MY BROTHER DID ROTTEN THINGS, BUT I FAILED HIM-- I SHOULD'VE BEEN STRONGER!
NOW I'LL NEVER HAVE PEACE.
"PEACE, HUH? WE'LL TAKE THAT UNDER CONSIDERATION."
"SEE YA 'ROUND, JOE."
SLAMM
ROBERT!!
ROB HAD SURVIVED SOMEHOW. HE AND THE FAMILY HAD FOUND ME!!
FATHER JOE! I FOUND THIS IN THE PEW BACK THERE!
The angels said "peace on Earth to men of good will--" Be of good will to the family and you will have peace.
--Merry Christm
BUT THEY WOULDN'T STOP ME THIS TIME. THIS TIME I WOULD FIGHT THEM HARDER.
WHAT IS IT, FATHER.
AN INVITATION, KID. ONE I'M DEFINATELY GOING TO ACCEPT.

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# Editorial

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Hopefully, you won't just pick up the first issue and never come back. We promise that this is only the beginning. We're trying to bring you the best that independent comics have to offer. We'll feature original short stories of Martin Wagner's **Hepcats** and **Bone** by Jeff Smith in early 1994. We'll look into the sketchbooks of such illustrators as Michael Wm. Kaluta, Tim Bradstreet and Arthur Suydam. We'll have prelude stories to upcoming series such as **Kilroy Is Here**, **The Trigger Man**, and **Black Mist**. We'll have new work by Craig Hamilton, Guy Davis, Chaz Truog, Bob Burden, P. Craig Russell, Tony Harris, and a host of others. We promise you many more surprises will be announced.

Next issue we'll be featuring a new, prelude story to Wayne Vansant's upcoming series from Apple Comics titled **Knights of the Skull**. Also, Malcolm Bourne (creator of Dark Horse's **Tales of Ordinary Madness** that featured the art of popular **Madman** artist Michael Allred) and hot, new Valiant artist J. Calafiore present the true-to-life horror of sexual child abuse and Jeff Lang and Steve Lieber give us **Playmates**—a look into the life of yesteryear. In the tradition of Peter Bagge and Daniel Clowes, Greg DiGenti will be making his comics debut with **Stubbs the Cat**. We believe Greg is a talent to watch out for. In addition, we'll have part two of Phillip Hester's **Boneshaker** and part one of our **Sketchbook** series, featuring Tim Bradstreet! Don't forget that next issue will be a HUGE 48 pages of story for only $2.95!

We're also very interested in what you, the reader, have to say about our efforts. Who do you want to see in these pages? What did you like about the present issue? What didn't you like? We aim to please, so let us know. You can write to us at:
**Negative Burn,**
**PO Box 672162,**
**Marietta, GA 30067-0037.**
If we hear from enough of you then we'll start a letters page.

Take Care,

**Joe Pruett** and
**Charles Moore**
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